

7094 – Don't Pass the Salt



The Issue

Sodium is a nutrient found in table salt and many other foods. While the body needs some sodium to function, too much may lead to high blood pressure, attributable to **half or more** of all strokes and heart attacks.

How Much Salt?

Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for healthy adults is 1,500mg sodium per day.

Healthy children need only 1000 to 1500 mg of sodium per day.

Health Canada recommends that adults do not exceed 2,300 mg of sodium per day

Note: 1 tsp (6 g) salt = 2,400 sodium

Food Claims

"Salt-free" = <5mg sodium per serving

"Low in sodium" = \leq 140mg sodium per serving

"Reduced in sodium" = at least 25% less than the regular product

Which Foods to Avoid?

Over 75% of the sodium we eat comes from processed packaged and ready-to-eat foods, fast foods and restaurant meals. Breads, breakfast cereals and bakery products also contain sodium even though they may not taste salty. Here is a list of some common foods which contain sodium:



Canned or packaged items: soups, stocks, cereal, baked beans, vegetable juices

- **Convenience items:** seasoned pasta and rice mixes, stews, spaghetti sauce, seasoning mixes, frozen dinners, muffins
- **Jarred foods preserved in salt:** pickles, relishes, olives, sauerkraut
- **Condiments and sauces:** ketchup, soy sauce, teriyaki sauce
- **Processed meats:** salt-cured ham, bacon, hot dogs, sausages, cold cuts, smoked meats
- **Cheese:** processed cheese, cheese spreads
- **Salted snack foods:** chips, pretzels, crackers, popcorn, trail mix, nuts

Tips for Lowering your Sodium Intake

1. At the Grocery Store: Buy lower sodium foods to prepare healthier meals at home.

- Read the food label. Buy unsalted and lower sodium foods whenever possible.
- Look for foods that contain less than 240 mg of sodium per serving.
- Look for products with a sodium content of less than 12% DV (Daily Value).

2. At Home: Prepare your own meals often, using little or no salt.

- Enjoy more vegetables and fruit. Use fresh or frozen instead of canned whenever possible.
- Taste your food before adding salt. Flavour food with herbs and spices.

3. Eating Out: Choose wisely when eating out.

- Ask for gravy, sauces and salad dressings "on the side" and use only small amounts.
- Flavour your food with lemon or pepper instead of adding salt, sauces or gravy.
- Ask for your meal to be cooked without salt or monosodium glutamate (MSG).



Sodium Content of Foods

Food	Portion	Sodium (mg)
Tomato products, canned, sauce	1 cup	1,482
Cottage cheese, 1% MF (milk fat)	1 cup	918
Condensed milk, canned	1 cup	389
Feta cheese	1 oz	316
Imitation crab	3 oz	715
Canned tuna, in water	3 oz	320
Bagels, plain, sesame, poppy, onion (enriched with Calcium propionate)	3 ½" bagel	379
Croutons, seasoned	1 cup	495
Macaroni and Cheese, canned	1 cup	1,058
Pasta with meatballs in tomato sauce, canned entree	1 cup	1,053
Pretzels, salted	10 pretzels	1,029
Red kidney beans, canned	1 cup	873
Chick peas, canned	1 cup	718
Lima beans, canned	1 cup	810
Peanuts, salted	1 oz (approx 28)	230
Beef jerky	1 large piece	438
Sandwiches, cheeseburger, large, single meat patty, with bacon and condiments	1 sandwich	1,043
Pork, cured, ham, whole, separable lean only, roasted	3 oz	1,128
Fast foods, pancakes with butter and syrup	2 pancakes	1,104
Fast foods, submarine sandwich, with cold cuts	6" sandwich	1,651
Sauce, pasta, spaghetti/marinara, ready-to-serve	1 cup	1,030
Soup, onion mix, dehydrated, dry form	1 packet	3,493
Soup, chicken noodle, canned, prepared with equal volume water,	1 cup	1,106
Baking soda	1 tsp	1,259
Soy sauce	1 tbsp	914

Resources: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/>, <http://www.eatrightontario.ca/>, <http://umaine.edu/>