

Shake the Salt Habit



CHALLENGE

Eat less sodium to protect your health

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read “Shake the Salt Habit.”
2. Create a plan to reduce the amount of sodium you consume daily.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



Have you ever stopped to take a look at how much sodium you’re consuming? If you don’t know, you’re not alone.

The average adult consumes an estimated 3,400 mg of sodium per day. Yet, the American Heart Association recommends consuming less than 1,500 mg of sodium per day for most adults.¹

So where’s all the sodium coming from? Fast food, meals-in-a-box, grab-and-go packaged snacks, processed meats, and deep fried foods.

These foods may be quick and convenient, but eating too much salty or high-sodium food can also put you on the fast track to high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke.

The Salty Side of Life Quiz

How much do you know about the health benefits of reducing sodium/salt in your diet? Take this quiz to find out.



T F

1. Too much sodium in your diet can increase blood pressure and the risk for heart disease and stroke.
2. You can lower your blood pressure in just a few days, by reducing the amount of sodium in your diet.
3. You need some sodium in your diet to help control blood pressure, absorb nutrients from food, and support nerve and muscle function.
4. Most adults should consume less than 1,500 mg of sodium/salt per day.
5. Canned soups, microwave meals, and breads do not contain high levels of sodium.

How did you do? The average adult should consume less than 1,500 mg of sodium per day. But most people eat twice that amount by eating things like fried foods, microwave meals, pizza, processed food, and processed meats. The good news: Eating more plant-based foods will help protect your heart and keep your blood pressure under control.

Answers: 1.True, 2.False, 3.True, 4.True, 5.False.

If your diet is similar to the average American’s, you’re loading up on far too much sodium/salt. For example, in one year, the average adult consumes 20 pounds of French fries and 23 pounds of pizza.



Consuming too much sodium can put your health at risk. But it doesn’t have to be that way. You can learn to improve your diet, limit adding salt to the foods you eat, consume less processed foods, and make healthier choices for meals and snacks. Take the month-long Health Challenge and Shake the Salt Habit.

Sodium in your diet
<https://tinyurl.com/4fptwmww>

4 Reasons to Consume Less Sodium



Eat less sodium. You've heard the advice before. But what does consuming too much sodium really do? Here are four reasons to shake the salt habit. Consuming too much sodium increases the risk for:

1. High blood pressure

About 1 in 3 adults have elevated or high blood pressure. It's a condition that forces the heart to work harder to circulate blood throughout the body. Over time, high blood pressure can damage your heart and arteries, lead to plaque build-up, and cause a heart attack or stroke.²

2. Kidney disease

Over time, high blood pressure can damage the small blood vessels in the kidneys. This increases the risk for kidney stones. Left unchecked, it can lead to renal disease, kidney failure, and dialysis. The warning signs: It can also make you very tired and short of breath. Your body may retain water, and you might pee a lot.³

3. Poor bone health

If you consume high levels of sodium, your risk for poor bone health goes up. Too much sodium in your diet can limit the amount of calcium your bones absorb. And that can make them weaker and more prone to injury.⁴

4. Eye disease

High blood pressure and a diet with too much sodium can damage the small blood vessels in the eyes. This condition limits the amount of oxygen your eyes receive. And it can lead to vision loss.⁵

10 high-sodium foods to avoid or limit
<https://tinyurl.com/mwxmh97x>

7 Simple & Healthy Ways to Limit Sodium

Wondering how to shake the salt habit to protect your health? Here are seven simple and healthy ways to limit sodium...

1. Read food labels

Read the Nutrition Facts label on the food packages. Check the sodium content. Choose foods that have less than 100 mg of sodium per serving. Limit frozen dinners, pizza, packaged mixes, canned soups, and salad dressings.



2. Buy fresh or frozen

When it comes to fruits and vegetables, fresh or frozen is best. Canned and processed foods typically contain higher levels of sodium. If you do buy canned foods, rinse before preparing to remove excess sodium.

3. Avoid or limit fast food

A typical fast-food meal with a burger and fries contains 1,00 mg of sodium. At chain restaurants, look up the nutritional information of menu items before you order.

4. Choose lean meats

If you eat meat, eat fresh poultry, fish, and lean meat rather than canned, smoked, or processed meats.



5. Make breakfast healthy

Instead of ordering breakfast on the go, make time to eat your morning meal at home. Choose low-sodium cereals or oatmeal. Enjoy fresh fruit or Greek yogurt.

6. Season with spices

Skip the salt shaker. Season foods with herbs, spices, lemon, lime, vinegar, or salt-free seasoning blends. Or use a salt substitute.



7. Choose low-sodium snacks

Instead of pretzels and potato chips, try healthy snacks like unsalted nuts, dried fruit, low-fat or fat-free yogurt, plain popcorn, or fresh fruits and vegetables.

Low Sodium:
Follow the DASH diet
<https://tinyurl.com/3kxtmfs2>

References

1. American Heart Association. (2023). Shaking the Salt Habit to Lower High Blood Pressure. From: <https://tinyurl.com/4663usdw>
2. Stamler, J. et al. (2018). Relation of dietary sodium (salt) to blood pressure and its possible modulation by other dietary factors. *Hypertension*, 71(4): 631-637. From: <https://tinyurl.com/v4see97d>
3. Arcand, J., et al. (2017). More evidence that salt increases blood pressure and risk of kidney disease from the Science of Salt: A regularly updated systematic review of salt and health outcomes. *Journal of Clinical Hypertension*, 19:813-823. From: <https://tinyurl.com/y4lnyvw9>
4. American Heart Association. (2022). High blood pressure may accelerate bone aging. From: <https://tinyurl.com/5beskp59>
5. Dziedziak, J., et al. (2022). Impact of arterial hypertension on the eye: A review of the pathogenesis, diagnostic methods, and treatment of hypertensive retinopathy. *Medical Science Monitor*, 28: e935135-1-12. From: <https://tinyurl.com/3a75wahp>



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to protect
your health

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar).
2. Create a plan to reduce the amount of sodium you consume daily.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to build strong bones.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, each week, and at the end of the month. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	
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_____ Number of days this month I consumed less sodium
 _____ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____