Less salt.
Better health.

Salt or sodium - which is it?

Sodium is another name for salt.

Food labels use the word sodium to tell you how much salt is in a serving. Sodium is measured in milligrams and is shown on labels as mg.

Do we need salt? Yes.

Some salt is necessary for good health. ***But, we don't need as much as we eat.***

Eating more fresh food, fruit, and vegetables is one way to help lower your blood pressure. Being physically active and keeping a healthy weight will also help lower blood pressure. Don't be sidelined by hypertension, a heart attack or a stroke – live better by cutting the salt.

Did you know eating too much salt can **increase your blood pressure?**

- ✔ High blood pressure is also called **hypertension.**
- ✔ High blood pressure can cause a *stroke* or *heart attack*.
- ✔ ***You can't feel high blood pressure.***

Do you know your blood pressure numbers and what they mean?

✔ **ASK YOUR DOCTOR** *to help you set a goal for your blood pressure.*	**Top Number** *(Systolic)*	**Bottom Number** *(Diastolic)*
Normal	120 or ↓	80 or ↓
Pre-High Blood Pressure *(Pre-Hypertension)*	120-139	80-89
High Blood Pressure *(Hypertension)*	140 or ↑	90 or ↑

(Numbers are for a healthy adult 18 years of age and older.)

How much sodium is too much?

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend 1500 mg of sodium each day for people:

- ✔ Who are over the age of 50
- ✔ Who are African American of any age
- ✔ With high blood pressure (140/90 or ↑)
- ✔ With diabetes, heart disease, or chronic kidney disease

*People not listed above should eat **less than 2300 mg** of sodium per day.*

What do these amounts of sodium look like?

How much sodium do people eat now?

- ✔ Most people eat 3400 mg of sodium each day or about 1½ teaspoons of salt.
- ✔ Salt is added to restaurant, fast food meals and processed foods (like hot dogs, bacon, lunch meat, soups, canned foods, cereals, breads, and condiments) to increase flavor.
- ✔ It is easy to eat too much salt and not know it.
- ✔ Most of the salt we eat ***almost 80%*** comes from restaurant meals and processed foods.
- ✔ Most people only get 10% of their sodium from salt added during cooking or at the table.

How can I eat less sodium?

AT THE STORE

- ✔ Buy fresh foods and less pre-prepared and processed foods.
- ✔ Buy unsalted nuts, seeds, pretzels and other foods.
- ✔ Read food labels to learn how much sodium is in a serving.
- ✔ Choose foods with "unsalted" or "low sodium" on the label.

AT RESTAURANTS

- ✔ Ask for a nutrition fact sheet. Use it to choose foods with less sodium.
- ✔ Ask to have your food made without salt.
- ✔ Only add pepper to your food.

AT HOME

- ✔ Snack on fresh fruits and vegetables instead of salty snacks.

  Try to eat four (4) or more servings of fruits and four (4) or more servings of vegetables each day. Fruits and vegetables are rich in potassium, which is a mineral that helps reduce blood pressure.
- ✔ Cook more fresh foods at home.
- ✔ If you like salt, slowly eat less of it over time. You will get used to liking less salt.
- ✔ Only add salt at the end of cooking; you will use less.
- ✔ Use seasonings and herbs instead of salt to flavor your food. For example try one or more of these spices:

  Beef: onion, pepper, sage, thyme; **Chicken:** ginger, rosemary, sage, thyme; **Fish:** curry powder, dill, dry mustard, lemon juice; **Potatoes:** garlic, onion, parsley, sage; **Tomatoes:** basil, dill, oregano, pepper

Your plan.

Check the ways you will eat less sodium:

- ☐ Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables
- ☐ Cook more fresh foods at home
- ☐ Eat less salty snacks
- ☐ Read food labels to find the amount of sodium
- ☐ Choose foods labeled "unsalted" or "low sodium"

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Better health.

www.idahoheartandstroke.org
www.diabetes.idaho.gov

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