



Sodium Fact Sheet



RESOURCE FROM THE **Dietitian Center**®

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HOW MUCH SALT IS TOO MUCH?

- The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that we eat no more than 2300 mg of sodium per day (about 1 tsp of salt).
- Americans on average consume nearly twice the amount of the recommended daily allowance of salt, or 4000 mg daily.
- People with high blood pressure and those at risk for high blood pressure (including African Americans and middle-aged and older adults) should aim for no more than 1500 mg of sodium per day.

WHERE DOES SALT COME FROM?

While some foods naturally contain sodium, most of the sodium we consume is from salt (sodium chloride) added during cooking, at the table and during food processing. Popular high sodium food choices include pickled foods, canned vegetables and soups, snack foods, cured meats, packaged mixes and frozen dinners.

Remember, not all foods with added salt taste salty. Some people add salt or a salty seasoning to their food at the table. Your preference for salt may decrease if you gradually decrease the amount of salt or salty seasonings to your food.

Sodium also comes from ingredients like baking soda, baking powder, and MSG.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I EAT TOO MUCH SALT?

- Too much salt in the diet can lead to high blood pressure. According to recent estimates, nearly one in three U.S. adults has high blood pressure. Since high blood pressure does not have symptoms, nearly one-third of these people don't know they have it.

HOW CAN I DETERMINE HOW MUCH SALT IS IN THE FOOD I EAT?

Read food labels:

SODIUM FREE: less than 5 mg sodium per serving

VERY-LOW SODIUM: no more than 35 mg sodium per serving

LOW-SODIUM: no more than 140 mg sodium per serving