

Reducing Sodium While Boosting

Flavors



Eating less sodium (salt) can help reduce your blood pressure and improve your heart health. Your body needs some sodium, but most Americans get much more than the recommended amount each day.

The good news is you can reduce the sodium in the foods you eat and drink while still maintaining great flavor. Read on to find out how!

Meal Planning Tips

- **Read food labels.** The Nutrition Facts label tells you how many milligrams (mg) of sodium are in one serving. Most of the sodium we eat comes from processed and packaged foods. Compare food labels for similar products. Foods labeled as “light in sodium,” “low sodium,” “lightly salted,” “unsalted,” or “no salt added” are better options than the original, higher sodium product.
- **Substitute other flavorful ingredients for salt.** Remove the salt shaker from your kitchen and dining room. Instead of salting food, get creative: add flavor with lemon juice, olive oil, vinegar, and herbs and spices, such as basil, curry, dill, garlic, onion powder, oregano, paprika, or rosemary.
- **Cut back on salt when dining out.** Making foods at home is the best way to limit the sodium you eat. When you eat out, ask that the chef prepare your food without added salt or other high-sodium ingredients.
- **Eat more potassium.** Foods high in potassium can help lower your blood pressure. High-potassium foods include sweet potatoes, tomatoes, white beans, yogurt, bananas, apricots, and spinach.
- **Enjoy lower sodium foods from every food group.** Review the chart on the next page. The “Choose less often” foods are high in sodium. The “Choose more often” foods are lower sodium alternatives.

Grains

- **Choose less often:** Salted breads and crackers; most ready-to-eat cereals and instant hot cereals.
- **Choose more often:** Unsalted breads; low-sodium crackers; slow-cooked oats; puffed wheat, puffed rice, or shredded wheat cereals.

Dairy

- **Choose less often:** Processed cheese; cottage cheese.
- **Choose more often:** Low-sodium, reduced-fat cheese and cottage cheese; reduced-fat sour cream; low-fat or nonfat yogurt.

Protein Foods

- **Choose less often:** Bacon, ham, pastrami, corned beef, salami, bologna, hot dogs, sausages; smoked or canned fish; canned beans with added salt.
- **Choose more often:** Fresh or frozen lean meat, skinless poultry, and fish; eggs; unsalted nuts; dried beans or no-salt-added canned beans.

Vegetables and Fruits

- **Choose less often:** Canned vegetables; vegetable juices; jarred or canned pasta sauces.
- **Choose more often:** Fresh or frozen vegetables (without sauces); low-sodium canned vegetables, juices, and tomato sauces; fresh and frozen fruits; fruits canned in water or natural juices (all fruits are naturally low in sodium).

Fats/Oils

- **Choose less often:** Salted butter or margarine; packaged sauces, gravies, and salad dressings.
- **Choose more often:** Unsalted butter or tub margarine; cooking oils; reduced-sodium or salt-free sauces, gravies, and salad dressings.

Condiments

- **Choose less often:** Table salt; relish; barbeque sauce; soy sauce; garlic salt; other seasoning mixes with salt.
- **Choose more often:** Lemon juice; fresh or dried herbs; vinegar; reduced-sodium soy sauce; spices; seasoning blends that do not contain salt.

