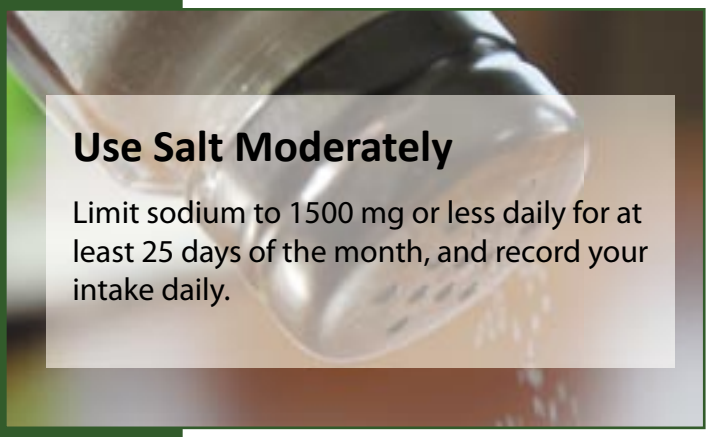
Wellness Goal



Use Salt Moderately

Limit sodium to 1500 mg or less daily for at least 25 days of the month, and record your intake daily.

How much sodium do I need?

Sodium is needed in your diet to maintain good health, but too much sodium in your system will unbalance it. The average American consumes about 6 to 18 grams of sodium daily, which is roughly 1-3 teaspoonfuls of salt. The body only needs about 200 mg of sodium each day—that is less than 1⁄4 teaspoon!

Healthy Americans should try to eat less than 2300 mg of salt per day. However, there are some groups that should have less than 1500 mg per day. They include African Americans, middle aged and older adults and those with high blood pressure. 1500 mg of salt roughly equates to 2/3 teaspoon of table salt. Keep this in mind when you use salt in recipes, add it freely to your foods, order out, or prepare processed foods.

Sources of Sodium

- Salt
- Monosodium glutamate (MSG)
- Baking soda
- Baking powder
- Disodium phosphate
- Any compound that has “sodium” or ‘Na” in its name

Why eat less salt?

High levels of sodium contribute to high blood pressure. Recent estimates show that one in three US adults have high blood pressure. Since no symptoms are present in nearly one third of these people, many people don’t even know they have it. Uncontrolled high blood pressure can lead to stroke, heart attack, heart failure and kidney failure, which is why high blood pressure is often referred to as “the silent killer.” The only way to know if you have high blood pressure is to have it checked regularly.

Decreasing the amount of sodium in your diet can reduce or even prevent high blood pressure. Heart disease and stroke are the number one and number three killers, respectively, in the US today—both are caused by high blood pressure.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Sodium Label Guidelines

According to the FDA, food products may use the following phrases to quantify the amount of sodium they contain:

- *Sodium free* – less than 5 mg of sodium per serving
- *Very low sodium* – 35 mg or less per serving
- *Low sodium* – 140 mg or less per serving
- *Reduced sodium* – usually reduced by 25%
- *Unsalted, no salt added or without added salt* – made without additional salt, but the product still contains sodium that occurs naturally within the food

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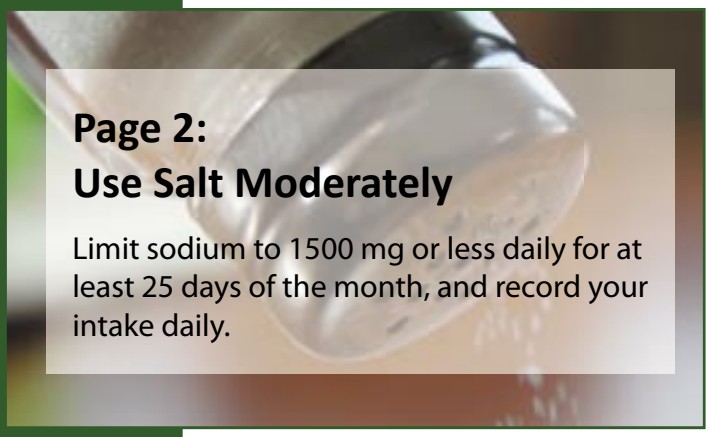

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Wellness Goal

15 Tips to Reduce Sodium

1. Choose fresh, frozen or canned items without added salts.
2. Select unsalted nuts or seeds, dried beans, peas and lentils.
3. Limit the amount of salty snacks such as potato chips, popcorn and pretzels.
4. Avoid adding salt to homemade dishes (including canned vegetables as they usually have added salt).
5. Select unsalted, fat free broths, bouillon or soups.
6. Select fat free or low fat, low sodium cheeses, as well as low fat yogurts.
7. When dining out, ask that your meal be prepared without added salt.
8. Use spices and herbs to enhance the flavor of your foods.
9. Limit commercially made main dishes like hash, meat pies, and frozen dinners with more than 700 mg of sodium per serving.
10. Limit ketchup, mayonnaise, sauces and salad dressings.
11. Take the salt shaker off the table.
12. Cook without salt.
13. Discuss using salt substitutes with your doctor.
14. Try cooking with lemon juice, vinegar and herbs.
15. Drain and rinse canned foods before preparing them to remove some of the salt.

Spices

WIN Wellness Initiatives Network

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