

HALT THE SALT!



GOOD NEWS!

Reducing your salt (sodium) intake can help prevent or control high blood pressure. In other words, sodium affects us all, whether or not we have hypertension!

Cutting current levels of salt intake by half could prevent high blood pressure in one in three adults. This is very significant, considering that 9 out of 10 Canadians between the age of 55 and 65 who don't have high blood pressure will develop the disease if they live to 85.

Why is it so important to control blood pressure?

Chronic high blood pressure is responsible for many other major health problems: more than 50% of strokes and congestive heart failure, as well as 25% of cardiac problems (heart attack, angina) and kidney disease. **Hypertension is the leading risk factor for death in the world.**

I don't put salt on my food so why should I worry?

Because most of the salt (sodium) we eat is hidden in our food! On average, Canadians consume more than **3 000 mg of sodium** daily, or **twice** the recommended daily intake, which doesn't even include salt added at the table or when cooking. Overconsumption of salt starts early in life: toddlers and young children already consume twice the recommended sodium intake for their respective age groups.

So where does all this salt come from?

Nearly 80% of our sodium intake comes from processed and restaurant foods like pizza, deli meats, submarine sandwiches, hamburgers, hot dogs, canned soups and packaged foods like pasta dinners. The salt you cook with or sprinkle on your food accounts for just 11% and the salt found naturally in foods adds another 10%.

A look at the sodium content of some common foods

	mg	Salt packets*
Canned vegetable soup, 250 mL	750	3
Homemade vegetable soup, 250 mL	390	1 ½
Seasoned rice, package/can, cooked, 250 mL	1 210	5
Rice, cooked without salt, 250 mL	0	0
Lean ham, 100 g	1 200	5
Pork tenderloin, cooked, 100 g	65	¼
Vegetable juice, regular, 250 mL	420	2
Vegetable juice, low sodium, 250 mL	140	½

*1 salt packet = 240 mg sodium

Recommended daily sodium intake

Limit your sodium intake to **2 000 mg or less** per day (less than a tea spoon), including the salt from prepared foods .

Within the highest consumers, a reduction of 1 000 mg per day can improve blood pressure, even though the recommended target is not achieved.

*2 000 mg of sodium = 8 packets of salt



BEWARE - NOT ALL HIGH-SODIUM FOODS TASTE SALTY!

DON'T RELY ON YOUR TASTE BUDS - READ THE NUTRITION FACTS PANEL ON PROCESSED FOODS

Which of the following pairs contains the most salt?

- 1 — a) 10 salted soda crackers or b) 1 commercial carrot muffin?
- 2 — a) 1 instant chocolate pudding or b) 100 ml salted peanuts?
- 3 — a) 1 instant oatmeal package or b) 50 g mozzarella cheese?
- 4 — a) 125 ml vegetable juice or b) 1 cup of cappuccino flavoured instant coffee?

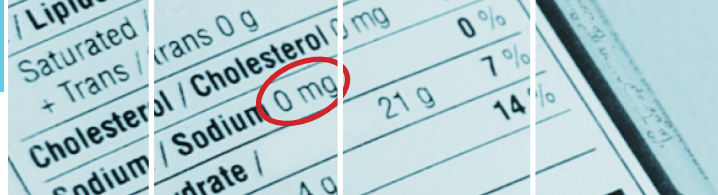
ANSWERS (in red):

- 1 - a) 322 mg b) 660 mg 2 - a) 441 mg b) 229 mg
3 - a) 310 mg b) 255 mg 4 - a) 265 mg b) 298 mg

Did you know that salt is added to many popular kids' foods? For instance, Sunny Delight® drink contains ¾ of a salt packet for every 250 mL. Reheatable pastries (like Pop-Tarts®, Toaster Strudels® and frozen waffles) contain an average of 1 to 1½ salt packets for every two pastries. Just a few of these sweet but surprisingly salty foods can quickly use up your whole daily sodium allowance.

These days, you can choose restaurant meals that are low in sugar, fat and calories, but they are still very high in sodium!

MENU	Teaspoon sugar	Teaspoon fat	Salt packets	Calories
1 Big Mac® + 1 fries + 1 regular medium cola	30	9	5 ½	1,110
1 grilled chicken burger + 1 salad with dressing + 1 diet cola	9	3 ½	7	450
¼ chicken (leg or breast) + 1 fries + 1 bun + BBQ sauce + creamy coleslaw + 1 regular medium cola	34	14	7	1,300
1 grilled chicken breast + rice + teriyaki sauce + vegetables + diet cola	12	1	7	460



WHERE DO I START?

1. Check food labels for salt content

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1 can (355 ml)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 80	0%
Fat 0 g	0%
Saturated 0 g + Trans 0 g	0%
Cholesterol 0 mg	0%
Sodium 140 mg	6%
Carbohydrate 16 g	34%
Fibre 5 g	5%
Sugars 11 g	17%
Protein 2 g	
Vitamin A 8%	Vitamin C 60%
Calcium 2%	Fer 2%

Tips on how to choose foods that contain less salt :

- Look for foods that contain less than 240 mg of sodium per serving or less than 10% of the daily value.
- Foods that are labeled "low sodium" (140 mg or less per serving) are very good choices... as long as you eat just one serving.
- Avoid foods that contain more than 400 mg of sodium per serving.

2. Eat fewer processed foods, even if they don't taste salty.

3. Eat at home as much as possible. Restaurant and take-out foods are very high in sodium.

4. Choose smaller serving sizes. The more generous the servings, the more salt they contain :

SIDE DISH



MAIN MEAL



SERVING SIZE

SMALL

3

LARGE

6

SALT PACKETS*

*excluding salt added for preparation or at the table

5. No time to cook? Is it having a negative impact on your diet?

Here are some tips that can help you reduce your salt intake :

- Buy frozen vegetables or fresh, ready-to-serve produce like pre-washed lettuce, sliced mushrooms and cherry tomatoes.
- Instead of using canned or jarred pasta sauces, make your own quick sauce with canned no salt added tomatoes.
- Replace deli meats with quick-cooking fondue meats for a delicious sandwich filling.
- Freeze vegetable cooking water to use as a base for a tasty homemade soup or buy commercial reduced-sodium broths.
- A quick homemade vinaigrette will make your salad even more delicious.
- Sea salt and vegetable salt are no alternative since they are rich in sodium.
- Try some new salt-free flavour boosters for your vegetables: ginger, toasted sesame seeds, citrus zest, jalapeno peppers, sambal oelek, curry, cardamom, five spice powder, seasoned vinegars, dried herbs or garlic, celery or onion powder.

6. Your taste buds need time to adjust to less salty food. Don't give up! Over time, you'll develop a preference for the reduced-sodium versions of your favourite foods. Why not start with half and half? For instance, mix salted nuts with plain roasted nuts, mix regular vegetable juice with the low-sodium version ...

TRY IT AND GIVE IT TIME - IT'S WORTH IT!

To help you reach your healthy sodium intake goals, visit :

www.hypertension.qc.ca

click on : [Info public - Foire aux questions - Sodium alimentaire](#)

An initiative of the members of the Société québécoise d'hypertension artérielle

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