



How can I follow a low-salt diet?

The average person takes in about 4,000 milligrams (4 grams) of sodium per day - you should aim to take in no more than 2,000 milligrams (2 grams) daily. Your doctor may even recommend less.

Give yourself some time . . . the desire for salt is an acquired one. Your taste buds will adjust, and you will really enjoy food again. For most people, the desire will begin to wane after about 2 weeks. Check out some of the tips below.

Be sure to read the nutrition label on the container of every food you eat. Do not forget to check the "serving size" as many manufacturers decrease the serving size so it appears their product contains less sodium.

♥ Here are some other tips:

- Remove the salt shaker from the table.
- Cut back on the salt in recipes by at least one-half.
- Find a "Low Salt Cookbook".

♥ Avoid high salt items

- MSG (monosodium glutamate), an ingredient in many oriental dishes.
- Soy sauce
- Ketchup
- Pickles
- Olives
- Anchovies
- Baking soda
- Bouillon cubes

♥ Watch snack foods. Read these labels particularly carefully. You would be surprised to know that pretzels are actually higher in sodium than potato chips!. There are very good low salt crackers, pretzels, and other snacks. Pop your own popcorn (. . . and don't add salt).

- Beware of pre-prepared foods, canned foods, or sauces/salad dressings.
- Substitute herbs for salt . . . you'll find a lot of things you'll like!
- Avoid eating out if possible. If you do, ask the waiter for help finding the low sodium items or call ahead to let them know you will need unsalted food available. Ask that your food be cooked without added salt.
- Choose a low sodium antacid if you use antacid pills or liquid.

- "Salt substitutes" may be used after discussion with your doctor. Many contain potassium, and too much of this substance can be dangerous in some conditions and with some medications.
- ♥ **Sodium partners with other compounds** (besides the well-known sodium chloride) as a food additive. Cake mixes, flavored milks, luncheon meats, jarred condiments, and snack foods may include ingredients that add sodium. The mineral may also seem hidden since many of these foods may not taste salty.
- ♥ **Pass Up Processed Foods**
 - About 75% of salt intake comes from processed food. Some food companies are developing products with less sodium, so keep an eye out for sodium listed on food labels. Only small amounts of sodium occur naturally in foods, eating mostly natural, whole foods will help keep levels of sodium down.

♥ **Cut Back on Condiments**

Always dress your sandwiches and burgers yourself. This way, you can not only control the amounts of condiments used, you can choose those that are lower in calories, fat, and sodium, such as:

- **Balsamic vinegar.** 2 teaspoons has 14 calories, 0 grams fat, and 2 milligrams sodium
- **Mustard.** 1 teaspoon has 10 calories, 0 grams fat, and 100 milligrams sodium (some brands are even lower – check the label)
- **Horseradish.** 2 teaspoons has 4 calories, 0 grams fat, and 10 milligrams sodium
- **Low-sodium light mayonnaise.** 17 calories, 1.3 grams fat, and 27 milligrams sodium (the numbers may vary depending on brand).
- **Lemon juice (from 1/2 lemon).** 8 calories, 0 grams fat, and 1 milligram sodium

Feel free to have all the lettuce, tomato, and onion your heart desires. Each adds 5 calories or less per serving, and is mostly sodium-free.

♥ **Beware of Dressings and Sauces**

If you think a little bit of dressing or sauce won't add that much sodium to your meal, think again. Most creamy salad dressings have about 300mg sodium per serving.

♥ **Opt for Alternatives**

Keep the pepper shaker and your favorite flavor of salt-free herb and spice blend (like Mrs. Dash). Then keep them front and center on your kitchen table to help you break the habit of salting your food.

♥ **Skip the Fast Food**

Eating at fast-food chains may be fast and cheap, but you pay the price in calories, fat, and sodium. Many fast-food items are big on sodium. The following items, at a few top chains, topped the sodium scale:

Wendy's

- **Homestyle Chicken Strips (3) with dipping sauce:** 1,690-1,890 milligrams sodium, depending on sauce
- **Frescata Club Sandwich:** 1,610 milligrams
- **Frescata Italiana Sandwich:** 1,530 milligrams
- **Roasted Turkey & Swiss Frescata Sandwich:** 1,520 milligrams
- **Big Bacon Classic Sandwich:** 1,510 milligrams

McDonald's

- **Deluxe Breakfast:** 1,920 milligrams sodium
- **Premium Crispy Chicken Club Sandwich:** 1,830 milligrams
- **Premium Crispy Chicken Ranch BLT Sandwich:** 1,750 milligrams
- **Premium Grilled Chicken Club Sandwich:** 1,690 milligrams
- **Big Breakfast:** 1,470 milligrams
- **Sausage, Egg, & Cheese McGriddle:** 1,300 milligrams

Burger King

- **Original Whopper Sandwich:** 1,020 milligrams sodium
- **Tendergrill Chicken Sandwich:** 1,210 milligrams sodium
- **BK Veggie Burger:** 1,100 milligrams sodium
- **BK Fish Filet Sandwich:** 1,380 milligrams sodium

*Spice It Up

Make foods tasty without using salt. Try these flavoring, spices and herbs:

For Meat, Poultry and Fish

Beef Bay leaf, marjoram, nutmeg, onion, pepper, sage, thyme

Lamb Curry powder, garlic, rosemary, mint

Pork Garlic, onion, sage, pepper, oregano

Veal Bay leaf, curry powder, ginger, marjoram, oregano

Chicken Ginger, marjoram, oregano, paprika, poultry seasoning, rosemary, sage, tarragon, thyme

Fish Curry powder, dill, dry mustard, lemon juice, marjoram, paprika, pepper

For Vegetables

Carrots Cinnamon, cloves, marjoram, nutmeg, rosemary, sage

Corn Cumin, curry powder, onion, paprika, parsley

Green beans Dill, curry powder, lemon juice, marjoram, oregano, tarragon, thyme

Greens Onion, pepper

Peas Ginger, marjoram, onion, parsley, sage
Potatoes Dill, garlic, onion, paprika, parsley, sage
Summer squash Cloves, curry powder, marjoram, nutmeg, rosemary, sage
Winter squash..... Cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, onion
Tomatoes Basil, bay leaf, dill, marjoram, onion, oregano, parsley, pepper

*Reproduced from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health.