

Sodium-Reduced Daily Eating Plan: *No Added Salt*

What is sodium?

Sodium is a mineral that helps your body balance its fluids. Too much sodium in your diet can cause your body to retain fluid. This extra fluid can raise your blood pressure and increase your risk for cardiovascular disease, congestive heart failure, and kidney disease.

Where does all this sodium come from? The major source of sodium in your diet is **salt**. Some sodium comes from the salt you add to your food at the table. A lot of sodium is also already in processed foods. Reducing these sources of salt can help you significantly lower your sodium intake. **The goal of this eating plan is to recommend — and help you recognize — those foods that contain less salt.**

How much sodium do we need?

Your healthcare providers recommend you **reduce the amount of sodium in your diet. The simplest way to do this is by not adding any extra salt to your food.** The human body only needs around 500 milligrams of sodium daily (the equivalent of about ¼ teaspoon of salt). Most people, though, get 4000 to 6000 milligrams daily, almost three teaspoons of salt. That's around ten times what your body requires! (A single teaspoon of salt alone has about 2300 milligrams of sodium.) Eating less salt will significantly help you reduce the amount of sodium in your diet.



General guidelines

To help you limit the amount of sodium you consume, follow these general guidelines:

- **Don't add salt to food you prepare or eat.** You can use salt substitutes if your physician approves them, but you still need to use them sparingly — salt substitutes can make your food taste bitter — and don't use them during food preparation. You should also avoid "lite salt," which is still a ½ salt mix.
- **Eat fewer commercially processed foods, which contain large amounts of sodium.**
- **Watch out for medications that contain sodium** — like some sedatives, antacids and alkalizers, headache remedies, or laxatives. If you follow a low-sodium diet, talk to your physician or pharmacist before using these medications.
- **Be extra careful at restaurants** — especially fast food restaurants. Get to know the restaurants in your area and the menu items they offer. Generally, food that's baked or broiled, and made without sauces or gravies will have less sodium.
- **Avoid sea salt.** It's not healthier than table salt.
- **Avoid soft water whenever possible.** Water softeners may add a lot of sodium to your water. Drink hard water instead. If you drink bottled water check the label for the sodium content.

Dietitian: _____

Phone: _____

Facility: _____

The ABCs of herbs and spices

Instead of reaching for the salt shaker, try some of these sodium-free seasonings to enhance the natural flavors in food:



<i>Allspice</i>	stew, tomatoes, peaches, applesauce, gravies
<i>Basil</i>	fish, lamb, salads, soups, Italian sauces
<i>Cayenne</i>	soups, casseroles, cheese sauces, baked egg dishes, BBQ, poultry and lean meats
<i>Cinnamon</i>	fruits, pork, bread, sweet potatoes, squash, plain yogurt
<i>Cumin</i>	chili, Asian meat dishes, stews, beans
<i>Curry</i>	lean meats, chicken, fish, tomatoes, sauces, rice
<i>Dill</i>	fish, chicken, vegetables, potatoes, salads, pasta
<i>Fennel</i>	lean pork, squash, beets, pasta sauces, seafood dishes
<i>Garlic</i>	lean meats, fish, poultry, soups, salads, vegetables, pasta dishes
<i>Ginger</i>	lean pork, fish, fruits, carrots, pumpkin
<i>Lemon/Lime juice</i>	fish, poultry, salads, vegetables, sauces
<i>Marjoram</i>	shellfish, veal, poultry, soups, stews, eggplant
<i>Mint</i>	lamb, fruit, salads, potatoes, bulgur, beans
<i>Mustard (dry)</i>	lean beef, ham, fish, salads, vegetable dishes
<i>Nutmeg</i>	potatoes, chicken, fish, cauliflower, broccoli, and cabbage dishes
<i>Onion</i>	lean meats, stews, vegetables, salads, soups, legumes
<i>Oregano</i>	sauces, Italian dishes, pizza, salads, vegetables
<i>Paprika</i>	fish, poultry, soups, salads, sauces, baked potatoes, beans
<i>Parsley</i>	cottage cheese, soups, salads, meats, fish, poultry, eggs
<i>Rosemary</i>	chicken, fish, lean pork, sauces, stuffing, potatoes, peas, lima beans
<i>Saffron</i>	rice and potato dishes, breads, sauces, soups, vegetables, squash, tomatoes
<i>Savory</i>	salads, lean pork, lean ground meats, soups, vegetables, squash, tomatoes
<i>Sesame</i>	salads, breads, chicken, vegetables, casseroles
<i>Tarragon</i>	sauces, salad dressings, marinades, vegetables, beets, chicken, fish
<i>Thyme</i>	lean meats, poultry, sauces, soups, peas, salads, tomatoes








Herb Hints






- Long cooking times can cause herbs and spices to lose their flavors. To get the most flavor, add herbs or spices to cooked foods within 1 hour of serving.
- Powdered herbs are stronger than dried, and dried are stronger than fresh. As a guide: ¼ teaspoon of powdered herbs gives the flavor of ¾ to 1 teaspoon of dried herbs or 2 teaspoons of fresh herbs.
- You can store dried herbs for up to a year covered in a plastic or glass container and in a dry, cool spot out of direct sunlight.
- Wine and herb vinegars make a great marinade for meats and sprinkled on vegetables.
- Lemon, lime, and pineapple juice also make a good marinade that you can sprinkle on vegetables for a unique taste.

This handout is intended for use during an appointment with a registered dietitian only, and is not meant for use by other clinicians.



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FOOD GROUP	FOODS RECOMMENDED	FOODS TO AVOID
<p>Milk and milk products (Limit to 4 cups of milk daily)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole, low fat, or skim <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – cocoa, chocolate, yogurt, or eggnog • Limit buttermilk to only one cup a week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
<p>Breads</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Except those listed in foods to avoid, all whole grain or enriched breads including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – homemade biscuits, pancakes, waffles, and muffins, all made without adding salt – unsalted pretzels, low sodium crackers, and low sodium or homemade bread crumbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bread, rolls, or crackers, with visible salted tops • Regular pretzels, chips, and similar salted snacks
<p>Cereals</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooked cereal prepared without salt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepared cereals that contain more than 400 milligrams of sodium per serving
<p>Fruits</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All fruits and fruit juices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
<p>Vegetables</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh, frozen, and low sodium canned vegetables • Low sodium vegetable juices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular canned vegetables and vegetable juices • Sauerkraut, pickled vegetables, or those prepared in brine or cooked with salty meats

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<p>Potatoes and starches</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White or sweet potatoes and low salt potato chips • Enriched rice and barley • Noodles, spaghetti, macaroni, and other pastas without salted meats or fats • Homemade bread stuffing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potato casserole mixes • Salted potato chips and salty snacks • Instant rice and pasta mixes • Commercial casserole and stuffing
<p>Meat and meat substitutes</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any fresh or fresh-frozen beef, lamb, pork, veal, game, and poultry • Any fresh-water or fresh-frozen fish (without breading) and shellfish • Low sodium canned tuna and salmon, or sardines • Peanut butter (limit to 2 tablespoons, 3 times a week) • Dried beans and peas • Eggs • Frozen dinners with less than 800 milligrams of sodium per serving • Low sodium cheese, cream cheese, ricotta cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoked, salt-cured, dried, canned, or frozen meat, fish, or poultry • Bacon, ham, cold cuts, hot dogs, sausages, and chipped or corned beef • Kosher-prepared meat • Sardines, anchovies, marinated herring, pickled meats or eggs • Regular canned tuna or salmon • Processed cheese • Frozen dinners
<p>Fats</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butter or margarine • Limited amounts of regular salad dressing • Low-sodium salad dressings and mayonnaise-type salad dressings • Vegetable oil and shortening • Light and heavy cream, sour cream 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salt pork, salad dressings containing bacon bits or bacon fat • Snack dips made with cheese, bacon, buttermilk, and instant soup mixes
<p>Soups</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All homemade soups made with recommended foods and milk (limit milk in cream soups to 4 cups per day) • Low sodium broth, bouillon, and consommé • Low sodium canned or dehydrated commercial soups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular bouillon, broth, and consommé • Regular canned or dehydrated commercial soups with more than 400 milligrams per serving
<p>Beverages</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All beverages, but: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – drink milk within set recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercially softened water, foods or beverages made with softened water

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<p>Sweets and desserts</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All fruits, cakes, cookies, sherbets, and ices. Desserts made with milk: count the milk content towards the recommended 4 cups a day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
<p>Other</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pepper, herbs, spices, flavoring, vinegar, lemon or lime juice, and salt-free seasoning mixes The following low sodium condiments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> catsup, mustard, chili sauce, fresh ground horseradish, Tabasco sauce, and mustard powder Unsalted nuts, seeds, popcorn, and pretzels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garlic salt, onion salt, celery salt, sea salt, rock salt, and Kosher salt Any other seasoning containing salt and sodium compounds Monosodium glutamate (Accent) Regular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> catsup, chili sauce, mustard, pickles, relishes, olives, and horseradish Kitchen Bouquet, gravy and sauce mixes BBQ, soy, teriyaki, Worcestershire, and steak sauce Salted nuts, seeds, popcorn, and pretzels All commercially prepared and convenience foods

Nutrition Label Hints

When you see these terms on a food label, here's what they mean:

- Sodium Free** — Less than 5 milligrams of sodium per serving
- Very Low Sodium** — 35 milligrams or less of sodium per serving
- Low Sodium** — 149 milligrams or less of sodium per serving
- Reduced Sodium** — 25% less sodium than the original version of the product
- No Added Salt or Unsalted** — No salt is added during the processing (this does not guarantee the food product is sodium-free)



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