
Low Sodium Diet

2.5 grams Sodium (2500 milligrams)

By following these guidelines you will be able to select foods low in sodium.

Guidelines

1. Eat a variety of foods each day for a balanced diet.
2. Do not add salt to your food during cooking or at the table. Instead, use herbs and spices to flavour your foods. (See "Flavouring Foods Without Salt.")
3. Do not drink water treated by a water softener. If you have a water softener, it should be connected so that your drinking water is not affected.
4. Avoid salty convenience foods and fast foods. These foods have a lot of salt added during their preparation.
 - Examples of high salt convenience foods are: canned or dried soups, sauces, seasoning mixes, canned spaghetti, TV dinners, pizza mixes, packaged macaroni dinners, and Hamburger Helper®.
 - Examples of fast foods are: foods from burger, fried chicken, and pizza restaurants and packaged foods such as breaded chicken or fish.
5. Buy fresh foods when you shop because they are usually lower in salt. For example, buy fresh meats, poultry and fish, and fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables.
6. Read the labels on packaged foods to find foods lower in salt. Foods listing salt or sodium near the beginning of the ingredient list are high in salt.

Note: Food labels may use the symbol "Na" instead of the word "sodium".
7. Before using a potassium containing salt substitute, ask the doctor if it is safe for you.
8. Do not use baking soda as an antacid. It is high in sodium. Before you buy a medication not ordered by your doctor, ask the pharmacist if it is allowed on a low sodium diet. For example, laxatives and antacids may contain sodium.
9. Before you travel to a hot climate, ask your doctor if you should continue your sodium restriction while you are away.

Adapted from the Low Sodium Diet: (2 gram sodium) from the *Manual of Nutritional Care, 2000* and the *BCDNA Manual of Nutritional Care, 1992*.

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Further Information

Recommended Cookbooks

Important: For foods allowed or not allowed, follow these guidelines, not the cookbook. These cookbooks are recommended for recipes and flavouring ideas, not as replacements for your diet guidelines.

Note: For all cookbooks, use only recipes that contain no more than 500 mg sodium per serving (see the recipe analysis).

1. Starke, R. D., & Winston, M. (1995). *The American Heart Association low-salt cookbook: A complete guide to reducing sodium and fat*. Toronto, ON: Random House of Canada, Ltd.
2. Lindsay, A. (1998). *Anne Lindsay's new light cooking*. Toronto, ON: Ballantine Books.
3. Lindsay, A. (1991). *Lighthearted everyday cooking*. Toronto, ON: Macmillan of Canada.
4. Stern, B. (1996). *More HeartSmart cooking*. Toronto, ON: Random House.
5. Stern, B. (1994). *Simply HeartSmart cooking*. Toronto, ON: Random House.
6. Jamal, K. (1998) *HeartSmart Flavours of India*. Vancouver, BC: Douglas and McIntyre.
7. Wong, S. (1996). *HeartSmart Chinese cooking*. Vancouver, BC: Douglas and McIntyre.

Eating Out on the Low Sodium Diet

Choose restaurants that will prepare food without salt. If you eat out regularly, make it a habit to select meals lower in salt. Ask the dietitian/nutritionist which of your favourite foods are low in sodium.

Sample Menu for Eating Out

Note: Ask for gravy, sauce or dressing on the side. If it tastes salty, do not eat it or use only a small amount.

- Appetizer with sauce on the side (for example, chicken wings with BBQ sauce on the side)
- Salad with oil and vinegar (or dressing on the side)
- Broiled, baked, roasted, poached, or grilled meat, poultry or seafood (with sauce or gravy on the side)
- Plain vegetables, potato, rice, or rolls
- Dessert
- Milk, fruit juice, soft drinks, coffee or tea

Guide for Restaurant Meals

- Sandwiches: Choose fillings of vegetables, roasted meat or poultry, egg, hard cheese, or fish. Avoid fillings of ham, processed meats, processed cheese and pickles.
- Pasta: All sauces are high in salt. Avoid high salt ingredients such as ham, parmesan or romano cheese, or olives.
- Chinese Food: Most foods served in Chinese restaurants are high in sodium. Eat Chinese food only occasionally. Choose plain rice rather than rice or noodles mixed with sauces. Avoid added sauces (like soy sauce or teriyaki sauce).
- On hamburgers choose tomato, onion, lettuce, hard cheese. Do not order processed cheese. Use condiments (relish, ketchup, mustard) sparingly.
- Fish and Chips: Ask for unsalted fries. Add lemon or vinegar, not salt or ketchup. If the batter tastes salty, eat only a small amount.
- Curries: Ask for foods prepared without salt. Avoid salty chutneys or relishes.
- Pizzas: All pizzas are high in salt. The ones that are lowest in salt are the vegetarian pizzas made with real mozzarella cheese and fresh vegetables (no olives), no processed meats. Try pizza without tomato sauce for an even lower sodium treat.

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Flavouring Foods Without Salt

1. Choose herbs, spices and seasonings that do not contain salt. Always check that salt or sodium is not on the ingredient list. For example, use:
 - Fresh garlic or garlic powder (not garlic salt)
 - Fresh, dried or powdered onions (not onion salt)

*Note: **Sea salt** is just as high in sodium as regular salt.*
2. Try using fresh herbs. Herbs add flavour and a fresh taste to foods.
3. Make your own blend of salt-free seasoning. Mix and store in a salt or pepper shaker.

Universal Seasoning

| | |
|------------------|---------------|
| 15 mL (1 Tbsp) | dried mustard |
| 15 mL (1 Tbsp) | paprika |
| 15 mL (1 Tbsp) | garlic powder |
| 15 mL (1 Tbsp) | onion powder |
| 7 mL (1 1/2 tsp) | black pepper |
| 5 mL (1 tsp) | basil |
| 5 mL (1 tsp) | thyme |

4. Sprinkle fresh lemon or lime juice on cooked rice, potatoes, vegetables, fish or chicken.

5. Look for new flavouring ideas in cookbooks and magazines.
 - Use fruit sauce for fish, meat, or chicken (pineapple, nectarine, orange, kiwi or mango mixtures).
 - Add curry powder to meat, poultry or fish.
 - Make your own salad dressings from oil, assorted vinegars, garlic, herbs, and spices.
 - Flavour stir-fried foods with fresh ginger and garlic. Add unsalted peanut butter for a Thai flavour.
 - Experiment with homemade pizzas made with any combination of fresh vegetables, allowed cheeses, herbs, and meats. Try it with and without tomato sauce (called flat bread).
6. Sprinkle balsamic vinegar on vegetables, and use it to give extra zip to marinades and salad dressings.
7. Use juice or wine as a flavouring in marinades, stewed meats and sauces.
8. Collect cookbooks and recipes that use low-salt flavourings. Exchange low-salt recipes with friends and family.

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Food Choices: 2.5 gram Sodium Diet

| Type of Food | Best Choices: 2.5 gram Sodium Diet | Foods to Avoid |
|---|---|---|
| Milk and Milk Products | Milk, yogurt, eggnog* Buttermilk (limit to 1 cup per week) Low sodium cheese including low sodium ricotta and cottage cheese, low sodium cream cheese <i>1 to 2 ounces of regular hard cheese (not processed cheese) may be used 3 times a week.</i> | Malted milk, milkshakes. Processed cheese and high amounts of regular hard cheese, cheese spreads and sauces. |
| Breads and Cereals | Whole-wheat, rye, pumpnickel and enriched white bread, rolls, muffins, cornbread, most dry cereals, unsalted cooked cereal, crackers and breadsticks with unsalted tops, unsalted bread crumbs. Rice, barley, noodles cooked without salt; unsalted bread stuffing. | Breads, rolls, and crackers with salted tops; quick breads (unless homemade without salt). Instant hot cereals; pancakes and waffles; commercial bread stuffing; self-rising flour and biscuit mixes, salted breadcrumbs or cracker crumbs. Commercially prepared rice or pasta mixes. |
| Meat, Fish, Poultry and Alternates | Any fresh or frozen beef, lamb, pork, poultry, fish, and shrimp, crab, lobster; canned tuna or salmon, rinsed . Eggs and egg substitutes. Unsalted nuts, seeds, and unsalted peanut butter, dried peas and beans. Frozen dinners (less than 500 mg sodium/serving). | Any smoked, cured, salted, koshered, canned or commercially breaded meat, fish, or poultry including bacon, chipped beef, cold cuts, ham, hot dogs, sausage, sardines, anchovies, crab, lobster, imitation seafood. Marinated and pickled meats. Pickled eggs. Salted nuts and nut butters. |
| Fruits and Vegetables | Fresh and frozen vegetables and low sodium canned vegetables. Regular tomato paste. Regular canned tomatoes: <i>limit to 3/4 cup 3 times a week.</i> Low sodium, salt free vegetable juices. Most fresh, frozen, and canned fruits. Fruit juices. | Regular canned vegetables, sauerkraut, pickled vegetables, and others prepared in brine; frozen vegetables in sauces; vegetables seasoned with ham, bacon, or salt pork. Regular vegetable or tomato juices. Commercially prepared potato mixes. Fruits processed with salt or sodium-containing compounds (i.e., some dried fruits). |

*Note: Not Recommended for Diets for Heart Health.

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| Type of Food | Best Choices: 2.5 gram Sodium Diet | Foods to Avoid |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Soups | Low sodium commercially canned and dehydrated soups, broth, and bouillon; homemade broth and soups without added salt and made with allowed ingredients. | Regular canned or dried soups, broth, or bouillon. Regular broth cubes or powders. |
| Fats and Oils | Vegetable oils, margarine or butter; unsalted salad dressings. Regular salad dressings: <i>limit to 1 Tbsp.</i> Cream and sour cream.* | Dips made with instant soup mixes or processed cheese. Large amounts of regular salad dressings. |
| Desserts and Sweets | Most; except as noted under foods to avoid. | Instant pudding mixes and cake mixes. |
| Other Foods | Salt substitute made from potassium chloride (<i>NuSalt®</i> , <i>NoSalt®</i> , <i>Salt-It®</i> , <i>Spike®</i>) with physician's approval. Salt substitutes made from herb/spice blends (<i>Mrs. Dash®</i>); pepper, herbs, spices; vinegar, lemon, or lime juice, hot pepper sauce; low sodium soy sauce (1 tsp or 5 mL); low-sodium condiments (ketchup, chili sauce, mustard); fresh ground horseradish; unsalted tortilla chips, pretzels, potato chips, popcorn, salsa (2 Tbsp or 30 mL) Low sodium carbonated beverages | Sea salt, rock salt, kosher salt; any seasoning made with salt including garlic salt, celery salt, onion salt, and seasoned salt; meat tenderizers; monosodium glutamate; regular soy sauce, barbecue sauce, teriyaki sauce, steak sauce, Worcestershire sauce, and most flavored vinegar. Canned and powdered gravy and dried sauce mixes. Regular condiments. Salted snack foods, olives. Salt substitutes containing salt (<i>No Salt®</i>) |

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