

1 What's the Fault With Salt?

Your doctor has recommended that you eat less salt. But what's wrong with salt?

Your body needs salt... in small amounts

If taken at the recommended amount, salt (sodium) isn't all bad for you. Your body needs sodium in small amounts for fluid balance, muscle strength and nerve function.

Salt Overload

When you eat too much salt:⁵

- Your body will try to flush out the extra sodium.
- If your body can't get rid of enough sodium, the sodium builds up in your blood. Your body responds by holding onto more fluid.
- That extra fluid increases your total blood volume.
- The added blood pushes harder against your blood vessel walls, and can cause your blood pressure to rise.
- Your heart has to work harder to pump all that extra blood. This can cause serious health problems over time.

2 Why a DASH Could Do Your Body Good

- The DASH diet is based on research that linked changes in diet to lower blood pressure.
- The DASH plan is low in salt, fat and cholesterol—which can help lower blood pressure. The DASH plan is also high in minerals, protein and fiber.
- People who stick with the program can lose weight and lower their blood pressure by several points over time.

Check out: *Your Guide to Lowering Your Blood Pressure* with DASH at <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/>

How Much Salt Do I Need?

The average American eats **3,600 milligrams** (mg) of sodium daily. African Americans need at most **1,500 mg** of sodium—that's over **one-half teaspoon** of salt.⁵

 **7 to 8 servings of grains and grain products each day**


I need ___ servings each day
One serving equals one of the following:
1 slice of bread
½ cup cooked rice, pasta, grits, or hot cereal
½ cup dry cereal
½ biscuit

 **4 to 5 servings of vegetables each day**

I need ___ servings each day
One serving equals one of the following:
1 cup raw leafy vegetables
½ cup cooked vegetables
6 ounces of 100% vegetable juice

 **4 to 5 servings of fruit each day**

I need ___ servings each day
One serving equals one of the following:
1 medium-sized fresh fruit
½ cup dried fruit
½ cup fresh, frozen, or canned fruit
6 ounces of 100% fruit juice

 **2 to 3 servings of low-fat or fat-free dairy products each day***


I need ___ servings each day
One serving equals one of the following:
1 cup of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk
1 cup of low-fat or fat-free yogurt
1 ½ ounces of low-fat cheese

 **2 or less servings of lean meats, poultry, or fish each day**

I need ___ servings each day
One serving equals one of the following:
3 ounces of cooked meat, poultry, or fish (the size of a deck of cards)

 **2 ½ servings of fats each day**

I need ___ servings each day
One serving equals one of the following:
1 teaspoon oil
1 teaspoon margarine or butter
1 tablespoon low-fat mayonnaise
1 tablespoon regular salad dressing
2 tablespoons low-fat or "light" salad dressing

 **4 to 5 servings of nuts, seeds, and dry beans each WEEK**

One serving equals one of the following:
½ cup unsalted nuts
2 tablespoons seeds
½ cup cooked dried beans

 **5 servings of sweets each WEEK**

One serving equals one of the following:
1 tablespoon sugar
1 tablespoon jelly or jam
1 tablespoon maple syrup
8 ounces of lemonade, fruit punch, or sweet tea

* If you have a hard time with dairy, you may be lactose intolerant. You can buy lactase pills (which can help your body process lactose) to take with the dairy foods, or buy lactose-free milk.

3 What's the Source of Salt in My Diet?³

- 77% Processed and packaged foods
- 12% Natural sources
- 6% Added at the table while eating
- 5% Added while cooking

Salt also lurks in places where you'd least expect it. Natural foods like milk, meat and shellfish contain salt. Baking soda and baking powder are surprisingly high in salt—1 tsp of baking soda has 1,000 mg of sodium.⁴

Be aware! Some "reduced" or "light" sodium products may still contain high amounts of sodium. Read the food label.³



Did You Know?

Eating less salt may help lower your blood pressure, but that's not the whole story. Adding certain nutrients to your diet can help, too. Eating foods high in potassium (bananas), calcium (milk) and magnesium (spinach) can all help control your blood pressure levels.⁵

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size ½ cup (130g)	
Servings Per Container 3½	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 25	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 10mg	1%
Potassium 220mg	8%
Total Carbohydrate 5g	2%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Sugar 3g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 5%	Vitamin C 30%
Calcium 4%	Iron 4%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.	

Reading the Food Label

Read and compare the food labels of the items you buy to help you Get to Goal and keep your daily sodium intake under your limit.⁵

- Look at the serving size. The amount of sodium listed is for one serving only.
- Look at the amount of sodium in milligrams. Keep in mind your daily sodium limits.
- Try to find items with no higher than 5% of your daily sodium value. More than 20% is considered high sodium.
- Look for foods that are labeled "low sodium," "sodium-free" or "no salt added."

DASH=Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension

