



SODIUM, SO WHAT'S IT TO YOU?

Overview

Salt... Just the sound creates the idea of thirst. Salt... the mineral that cakes your clothing after a summer's day of hard physical labor. Salt... that most basic of seasonings which can impart such flavor to a food,,,

This brochure gives you insight into:

- Dietary sources of sodium
- MSG as an additive and foods commonly containing MSG
- An explanation of sea salt and kosher salt
- The individuals who typically benefit most by limiting excessive sodium intake

How Do I Get Salt In My Diet?

An Estimated 77% of our dietary sodium comes from prepared & processed foods, including "convenience" foods. Only 11% of your sodium comes, on average, from what you add.

More Obvious Sources:

- The salt shaker
- Condiments (Catsup, Soy Sauce, Steak Sauce, Mustards)
- Canned Soups
- Chips and Salted Nuts

Less Obvious Sources:

- Frozen Meals, including "healthy meals"
- "Instant" anything
- Some ready-to-eat cereals
- Cheeses, especially "processed" cheeses
- Broths and bouillons
- Salad dressings
- Convenience rice dishes
- Fast Foods
- Leaveners in baked items such as baking powder & baking soda
- Pickled foods (olives, vegetables, meats)



- 5% added while cooking
- 6% added while eating
- 12% from natural sources
- 77% from processed and prepared foods

Dietary sodium (Na+) is measured in milligrams (mg). The American Heart Association recommends **adults consume less than 2400mg sodium daily**. The average American adult consumes 3000-6000 mg Na+ daily. To get a better idea of how much sodium 2400mg is:

- 1/4 teaspoon salt = 600mg sodium
- 1/2 teaspoon salt = 1200mg sodium
- 3/4 teaspoon salt = 1800mg sodium
- 1 teaspoon salt = 2400mg sodium
- 1 teaspoon baking soda = 1000mg sodium

Do I need iodized salt?

Yes! Unless your doctor has told you not to, choose salt that has been iodized. Iodine is important for proper thyroid function. Without it, people can develop goiters (an enlarged thyroid gland that results in a large mass protruding from the neck), brain damage and growth abnormalities. This is rare in the United States (because our supply of salt is iodized), but is seen in many other countries throughout the world.

Kosher & Sea Salts

Kosher salt is typically additive-free and comes in large crystals of salt, which makes it useful for curing meats (it can absorb more moisture). The salt itself does not conform to Jewish food laws, but it is used to make kosher meats. It does not contain iodine, but is otherwise similar to table salt. It also has a distinctive flavor preferred by some cooks and, as a coarse salt, can be used in recipes where a salt crust is desired.

Sea salt comes from sea water instead of being mined. It has the same nutritional value as table salt, but differs in texture and flavor. Like kosher salt, it contains no iodine or other additives. It's really a matter of personal preference & recipe needs. The nutrient content between table salt, kosher salt and sea salt is similar.

Sodium Content

Standard Terms to Identify Sodium Content in Foods

- **Sodium-free and salt-free**: less than 5mg of sodium per serving.
- **Low sodium**: 140mg or less per serving.
- **Light in sodium**: 50% less sodium than the comparison food.
- **Very low sodium**: 35mg or less per serving.

Foods that are Naturally Low in Sodium:

- Fruits and fruit juices
- Fresh vegetables and frozen-without-salt vegetables
- Minimally processed grains such as rice & pasta (see label)
- Unsalted nuts & seeds
- Fresh meats, fish, poultry (prepared without salted coating, sauces, tenderizers, salts)
- Fresh herbs & spices (except salts)
- Soups made with homemade stocks/ broths

Sodium Levels in Common Foods			
Food Item		Amount	Mg Na+
Cereals	GM Corn Chex	1 cup	288
	Kellogg's Crispix	1 cup	210
	Kroger's Shredded Wheat	1 ¼ cups	0
	Old Fashioned Cooked Oatmeal	1 cup	0
	Prepared Instant Oatmeal	1 cup	377
	Post Grapenuts	½ cup	354
Rice/Grains (cooked)	Penne Pasta, Whole Wheat	1 ½ cups	0
	Rice-a-Roni, Spanish	2/3 cup	980
	Brown Rice, whole grain	1 cup	5
Prepared/ Canned Foods	Campbell's Cream of Chicken Soup, condensed	1/2 cup	870
	Swanson's Chicken Broth	1 cup	960
	Canned Refried Beans	1/2 cup	610
	Canned cut Green Beans	1/2 cup	380
Cheese	Cheddar Cheese, shredded	1 cup	702
	Swiss Cheese, aged	1 oz.	74
	Swiss Cheese, processed	1 oz	388
	Banquet Fried Chicken Meal	1- "extra helping" size dinner	2400
	Banquet Mac. & Cheese	12 oz. meal	1330
Condiments and Salad Dressings	Soy sauce	1 Tbsp	1024
	Kraft original BBQ sauce	2 Tbsp	424
	Prepared mustard	1 tsp	56
	Tabasco pepper sauce	1 tsp	30
	Old El Paso salsa	2 Tbsp	147
	Hellman's Tartar Sauce	2 Tbsp	300
	Kraft Ranch Dressing	2 Tbsp	287
	Kraft Zesty Italian Dressing	2 Tbsp	505
Fast Foods	Taco Bell Beef Burrito Supreme	1	1210
	Wendy's Big Bacon Classic	1	1460
	Arby's Chicken Fingers	4-pack	1590
	Pizza Hut Italian Sausage Pizza	4.7 oz. slice	910

Who Benefits most from reduced sodium intake?

1. Those diagnosed with Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) or heart disease and those who are taking one or more diuretics to control blood pressure and prevent fluid build up in the lungs or extremities
2. Females who are especially susceptible to premenstrual syndrome (PMS). Reducing sodium (among

other actions) one week prior to menses can help alleviate tension, bloating, and other symptoms (see the pamphlet "Women's Health: It's A Girl Thing")

3. Individuals with chronic renal failure who have been instructed by their physician to limit salt/ sodium intake

A Word About MSG

Monosodium Glutamate, or MSG, in a food contributes to its total sodium content. Table salt contains 39% as sodium; MSG contains 12% as sodium. Since the function of MSG is as a flavor enhancer, it could be argued that the use of MSG may provide flavor to a food which would otherwise require additional sodium to provide an acceptable taste. MSG has long been established on the FDA's "Generally Recognized As Safe" or GRAS list. The controversy surrounds the glutamate component (an amino acid), which was discovered early in the 1900s to provide a fifth flavor to the original four known flavor senses (salty, sweet, sour, bitter). This "fifth flavor" is present in only the "unbound" form of glutamate and is found naturally in foods such as cheeses, tomatoes, mushrooms and walnuts. MSG is made by a fermentation process from naturally occurring sugars (beet, corn, cane) and added to meat extracts, soy sauces, broths, and many food ingredients. Some people are thought to have a sensitivity to MSG. Reported symptoms include headache, tingling and a warming sensation, but no conclusive evidence links MSG to these symptoms.

Additional Reading & Resources

- <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=538>
- <http://www.msgfacts.com/lookatfacts.html>
- <http://www.eufic.org>
- <http://www.truthinlabeling.org/hiddensources.html>
- <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/sea-salt/AN01142>
- <http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/sodium/NU00284/METHOD=print>
- <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/prevent/sodium/sodium.htm>
- <http://pi.oregonstate.edu/infocenter/minerals/iodine/>

Bowes & Church's Food Values of Portions Commonly Used, 18th edition. By Jean Pennington and Judith S. Douglass. Pub: Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins, 2005

