

# Your Guide To: **A Low-Sodium Diet**



Sodium is a necessary part of our diet. It is needed to keep fluids balanced in your body and to aid your nerves and muscles. However, sodium can contribute to high blood pressure, swelling, and over retention of water that can lead to an increased risk of stroke, heart attack and kidney disease.

The American Heart Association recommends consuming no more than 1,500 mg of sodium per day. You may not realize how much sodium you consume because foods high in sodium do not always taste salty. And did you know that just one teaspoon of table salt equals more than 2,300 milligrams of sodium?

## **Why is sodium related to cardiovascular risk?**

Sometimes, your kidneys may not be able to eliminate excess sodium from your body, so the sodium accumulates and retains water in your blood. As your blood volume increases, your heart works harder and your blood pressure rises. This is how excess sodium in your body can lead to heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and congestive heart failure.

## **How much sodium is in what you eat?**

To manage your sodium intake, learn where the sodium comes from by reading food labels and keeping in mind the listed serving size. The following are the main sources of sodium in a usual diet:

- **Processed and prepared foods.**  
Nearly 80% of the average person's salt intake is from packaged, processed, and restaurant foods. Processed foods include bread, frozen dishes, pizza, cold cuts, bacon, cheese, canned soups and fast foods. For example, did you know that one oat-bran bagel contains 532 milligrams of sodium?
- **Natural sources.**  
Some foods, such as vegetables, dairy products, meat and certain fish, naturally contain sodium. Keep in mind that taste alone may not tell you which foods are high in sodium. For example, 1 cup of low-fat milk has about 125 milligrams of sodium.

## **Tips to cut back on your sodium intake:**

Taste for salt is acquired, so you can learn to enjoy less.

Decrease your use of salt gradually and your taste buds will adjust. Here's some ways to cut back on the salt:

- Eat more fresh foods. Most fresh fruits and vegetables are naturally low in sodium. Frozen plain vegetables (no added sauce) are good too. Also, fresh meat is lower in sodium than packaged meat, such as bacon, hot dogs, sausage and ham. Buy plain whole-grain rice and pasta and make your own soups from scratch.
- Avoid convenience foods such as canned soups, pre-packaged dinners, pasta and rice mixes, instant cereals and puddings, and gravy mixes.
- Opt for low-sodium products when available.
- Remove salt from recipes whenever possible. Use herbs, spices, and juices instead of salt to season your food.
- Limit your use of condiments.

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## Foods to Choose: A Sample Menu

### Breakfast

- Fresh fruit
- Low sodium cereal (hot or cold)
- Milk
- Low sodium wheat bread
- Reduced sodium margarine or peanut butter

### Lunch

- Lean roast turkey on whole wheat bread with low sodium mustard
- Raw carrot sticks
- Applesauce
- Unsalted pretzels

### Dinner

- Grilled chicken
- Boiled potatoes
- Steamed fresh vegetables
- Tossed salad and low sodium dressing
- Low sodium roll with low sodium margarine
- Fresh melon
- Angel food cake

### Snack

- Fresh fruit

Note: For a diet in which you consume 1,500 mg sodium per day, a sample plan might involve eating 400 mg at breakfast, 100 mg for a daily snack and 500 mg for both lunch and dinner.

### Regular Canned Tomatoes

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size ½ cup (126g) Servings Per Container 3½	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 25	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 250mg	10%
Total Carbohydrate 6g	2%
Dietary Fiber 2g	
Sugars 2g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 10%	Vitamin C 15%
Calcium 2%	Iron 2%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.	

### Low Sodium Canned Tomatoes

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size ½ cup (126g) Servings Per Container 3½	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 25	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 50mg	2%
Total Carbohydrate 6g	2%
Dietary Fiber 2g	
Sugars 2g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 10%	Vitamin C 15%
Calcium 2%	Iron 2%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.	