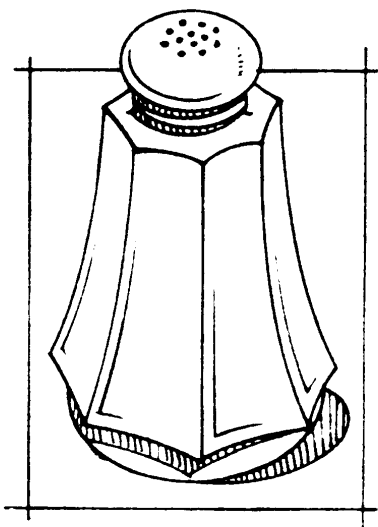


# Hold the Salt!

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## TOO MUCH SALT?



Salt—also called sodium and sodium chloride—is an important mineral that helps your body function. It helps maintain fluid balance in your body.

The adult body only needs a small amount of salt to function properly—about 2,400 milligrams (or about 1 teaspoon) daily. Chances are, you are eating much more than that.

Why? Small amounts of salt are found naturally in many foods. However, salt is often used in food processing. In fact, most of your salt intake probably comes

from salt that has been added to prepared foods. In addition, people often add salt to their food because they believe it enhances flavor.

## WHY IS TOO MUCH SALT BAD FOR MY HEALTH?

There are good reasons to consider reducing your salt intake.

Extra salt in your diet may lead to high blood pressure, which increases your risk of heart disease, stroke, and kidney damage.

Lowering your salt intake can lower your risk of developing these dangerous conditions.

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## **HOW DO I FOLLOW A HEALTHY LOW SALT DIET?**

Fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, fresh meat, chicken, and fish, fresh eggs, dairy products, and grain products are all part of a healthy, low-salt diet.

Look for low-salt products in the supermarket. Because many people have to reduce their salt intake, many products are made for low-salt diets. Even foods that usually have a lot of salt, such as bacon and peanut butter, have low-salt versions.

## **WHAT FOODS SHOULD I AVOID?**

Ask your doctor or dietitian what foods to avoid.

In general, you should not eat:

- Frozen vegetables with sauces
- Pickles, relish, and olives
- Sauerkraut
- Canned vegetables
- Vegetable juices
- Frozen meals
- Lunch meats or deli meats
- Processed meats, such as hot dogs and sausages
- Packaged gravy mixes
- Boxed macaroni and cheese
- Pancake mix

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- Biscuit mix
- Instant hot cereal
- Buttermilk
- Cheese spreads
- Salted crackers
- Antacids

Also, these products may have a lot of salt:

- Cheese
- Gravy mixes
- Ketchup
- Chili sauce
- Mustard

Look out for these high sodium ingredients:

- Monosodium glutamate
- Sodium chloride
- Sodium benzoate
- Disodium phosphate
- Baking soda
- Baking powder

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## OTHER TIPS

- Eat a variety of foods in moderate amounts.
- Read labels carefully! Choose foods with a moderate amount of salt and sodium.
- Eat freshly prepared foods (rather than frozen foods) as often as possible.
- Do not add salt to recipes.
- Do not keep salt on your table. Learn to enjoy the natural flavor of foods!
- Use herbs and spices to flavor food. “Mrs. Dash” is a common favorite.
- Ask your doctor or dietitian about salt substitutes. Salt substitutes can be found near the spices in your supermarket.
- Increase the amounts of fruits and vegetables you eat. These foods have very little salt. They are also very healthy.
- Make small changes in your eating habits at a time. Eventually, healthy eating will become part of your lifestyle!