

SALT FACTS

Most of the salt we eat comes from sodium chloride - better known as table salt. Sodium is found in every food group and is necessary for the normal functioning of the human body. However, most people get more than they need, and reducing salt and sodium intake has possible benefits for our health.

A Taste for Salt

Canada's Guidelines for Healthy Eating encourages us to reduce our salt intake. We are not born with a taste for salt. Our preference for it is learned over time. Try reducing your salt intake slowly and you will find that over a few months you will prefer the taste of less or even no salt on your food.

To lower your salt intake:

- Take the salt shaker off the table.
- Taste your food before adding salt.
- Make more foods from scratch, so you can limit the amount of salt that goes in.
- Choose unsalted pretzels and unsalted nuts in place of potato chips and other salty snack foods.
- Use fresh meats like roast beef or turkey more often than processed meats like ham or bologna.
- Read labels and try new products that are 'low-sodium' (50% less sodium than the regular product).
- Check the ingredient listing and avoid foods with large amounts of baking soda, baking powder and MSG.
- Use fresh or frozen vegetables more often. Rinse canned vegetables and legumes with cold water to lower the sodium content by 40%.

- Skip the urge to add salt to cooking water for pasta, rice, or vegetables.
- Use garlic powder, onion powder, herbs and salt free seasonings in place of garlic salt, onion salt and other seasoned salts.



Try these seasonings to flavour your food without salt:

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| Beef: | Bay leaves, dry mustard powder, marjoram, nutmeg, onion, pepper, sage, thyme |
| Chicken: | Lemon juice, marjoram, paprika, parsley, sage and thyme |
| Fish: | Bay leaves, curry powder, dry mustard powder, lemon juice, marjoram, paprika |
| Pork: | Applesauce, garlic, onion, sage |
| Pasta: | Italian herb mix, lemon juice, garlic |
| Rice: | Chives, onion, curry powder, chili powder, green pepper, parsley |
| Vegetables: | Dill, basil, marjoram, oregano, onion, chives, garlic, parsley, mint |



These foods are higher in salt:

- Instant hot cereal
- Convenience rice, pasta or casserole mixes
- Tomato and vegetable juices
- Processed cheeses, cheese spreads and sauces
- Processed meats such as bacon, ham, smoked meats, sausages and wieners
- Fast food and frozen dinners
- Canned and dry soup mixes, including bouillon cubes
- Snack foods like potato chips, pretzels and salted nuts
- Sauces like soy sauce, bottled salad dressing, tartar sauce, relish and gravy
- "Pickled" foods, including fish, meats and vegetables
- Seasoning salts like garlic salt and onion salt

These foods are lower in salt:

- Whole grain breads and cereals
- Plain rice, pasta or potatoes
- Fresh and frozen vegetables and fruit
- Milk and yogurt
- Hard cheese
- Fresh or frozen meats, poultry and fish
- Eggs
- Unsalted nuts
- Dry or fresh legumes

Check Labels Carefully for Sodium Content

- ✓ Salt Free means less than 5 mg of sodium per serving.
- ✓ Low Sodium means that the product has 50% less sodium than the original, and no more than 140 mg of sodium per serving.
- ✓ Very Low Sodium means 35 mg or less in a serving.
- ✓ Reduced Sodium is at least 25% less sodium than the regular version of the product.
- ✓ If the sodium content is not on the label, call the manufacturer of the product for more information.
- ✓ No Salt Added or Unsalted does not guarantee that the product is sodium free. It means that no additional salt was added during processing.



Need More Help?

If your doctor has recommended a reduced sodium diet with 3000 mg or lower, or you are having difficulty reducing the sodium in your diet, see a registered dietitian for individual counselling.