

A Sutter Health Affiliate

Low-Sodium Diet

A low-sodium (salt) diet may help lower blood pressure and prevent build-up of extra water in your body. This diet can help those with high blood pressure, heart failure, kidney disease, or other conditions in which swelling or fluid retention can occur.

Even if you take a pill for blood pressure or a water pill (diuretic) to remove fluid, it is still important to have less salt in your diet.

Guidelines for Sodium Intake:

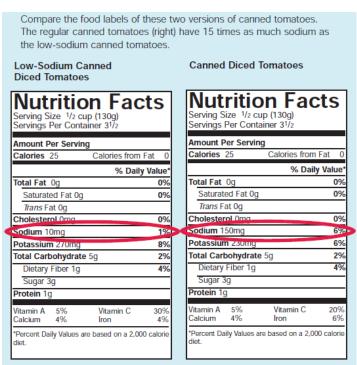
Current recommendations are to limit sodium from all sources to **1,500 mg per day**, which is about **300 to 400 mg per meal** and **100 to 200 mg per snack**. Your doctor or dietitian can tell you the specific limit that is right for you.

Keep in mind that adding just ¼ teaspoon of table salt to foods – about a "pinch" – uses 600 mg of your daily sodium total.

Read labels (see example below) to know how much sodium is in your foods. Remember to multiply the amount of sodium by the number of serving sizes you are eating!

Tips to lower your sodium intake:

- Use herbs, lemon, wine, and vinegar instead of salt to flavor foods
- ➤ Avoid processed/packaged foods, canned soups, frozen dinners, and entrees with gravies or sauces (try shopping more around the edge of the grocery store the inner aisles are where all of the salty processed foods are)
- Try fruits, unsalted nuts, veggie sticks, or other low-sodium snacks in place of highsalt snacks like potato chips, pretzels, or popcorn
- Limit/avoid fast foods that are high in sodium
- Use salt substitutes only on the advice of your physician. In certain medical conditions, these might be harmful
- Balance eating a higher sodium food by eating low-sodium foods for the next few meals and increasing your intake of fruits and vegetables
- Look out for sources of sodium added to food in other forms, such as MSG, baking soda/powder, and preservatives such as sodium benzoate.



Salt in Diet

Use this table to help you choose foods that fit in to your daily sodium recommendation.

Daily goal: less than _____ mg total (____ mg per meal and ____ mg per snack)

| Food | Choose More Often | Choose Less Often | Choose Less Often |
|--|--|---|--|
| Group | Low in Sodium < 100 mg/serving | Med Sodium 100-300 mg/serving | High Sodium > 300 mg/serving |
| Spices, Sauces & Condiments | Cinnamon, garlic, curry, mint, lemon juice, dill, onion, parsley, basil, dry mustard, paprika, oregano, Tabasco sauce, vinegar, etc. | BBQ sauce, catsup, chili sauce, salsa, gravies, mustard mayonnaise, tomato sauce, bottled salad dressing | Salt, MSG., salted condiments like: garlic/onion/seasoning salt, marinades, teriyaki sauce, Worcestershire sauce |
| Grains | Flour, rice, pasta noodles, whole grains, matzo, hot cereals (not instant), unsalted popcorn, Shredded Wheat | Breads and rolls, most ready-to-eat cereals, biscuits, muffins, cakes, pies, cookies, pastries, pancakes, waffles, etc. | Commercially prepared spaghetti with sauce, instant hot cereals, pretzels, crackers, salted popcorn, chips and other snack foods |
| Vegetables & Fruits | Fresh, frozen and canned fruits, fresh and plain frozen vegetables (not types with sauces or seasonings) | Canned vegetables, frozen lima beans, frozen peas | Pickled vegetables, olives, pickles, sauerkraut, vegetables with seasoned sauces |
| Beverages | Carbonated beverages, coffee, tea, most mineral water | Milk, buttermilk | Tomato juice, vegetable juice |
| Fish, Poultry, Meat and Other Dishes | Fresh meat w/o salt such as beef & veal, lamb, poultry, pork, eggs, unsalted nuts and peanut butter, tofu, green soybeans | Fresh shellfish, salted peanut butter | Bacon, ham, corned beef, luncheon meats, sausages, salami, processed turkey, frozen, restaurant or prepackaged entrees, canned/packaged soups, salted nuts |
| Milk Products | Cream cheese, ricotta or Swiss cheese, unsalted butter or margarine | Milk, buttermilk, salted butter or margarine, ice cream, pudding | Most cheeses, such as blue, cottage, parmesan, American |

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