African American Health Coalition, Inc.

Spice Up Your Life!

Eat Less Salt and Sodium

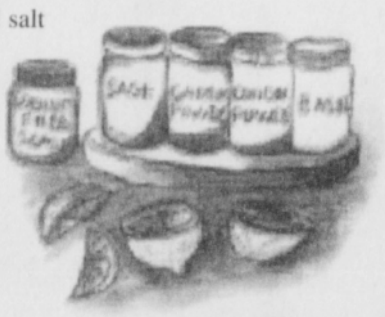
You should cut back on salt and sodium in your diet to help prevent or lower high blood pressure. If you have high blood pressure lowering it can reduce your chances of heart disease and stroke.

Did you know....

Table salt is made up of two compounds‹sodium and chloride. Most of the sodium in your diet comes from processed foods. The remaining comes from the salt added at the table, and salt added while cooking. Limit the amount of sodium that you consume from all these sources to no more than 2,400 milligrams (mg) each day which is equal to about 1 teaspoon of salt.

Go easy in the kitchen.

- Use less salt and seasoned salt when you cook.
- Use spices and herbs or low sodium seasonings like sodium free bouillon or onion powder, garlic powder, and sodium free seasoning blends.

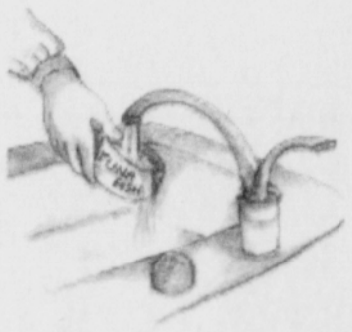


Try these:

- Sprinkle lemon juice over vegetables.
- Season or marinate meat, poultry, and fish ahead of time with onion, garlic, and your favorite herbs before cooking to bring out the flavor.

Take steps to make meals lower in salt and sodium.

- Use smoked or salt-cured meat products only in small amounts for flavoring.
- Prepare fresh lean pork roast instead of country ham.
- Rinse canned vegetables and fish such as tuna to remove some sodium.



Be in control at the restaurant.

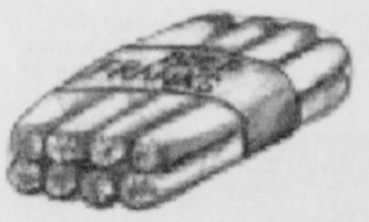
- Choose foods without sauces. If you prefer, ask for sauce and salad dressing to be served "on the side."
- Ask for your meal to be prepared without salt or monosodium glutamate (MSG). Then if you must, you can add a small amount of salt.
- Check the things you will do to eat less salt and sodium.
- Read food labels. Choose foods that have the lowest Percent Daily Value for sodium. Also buy foods that are labeled "reduced sodium," "low sodium," "sodium free," or "no salt added."
- Buy fruits and vegetables for snacks. Choose chips, crackers, or nuts that are lower in sodium.
- Take the salt shaker off the table.
- Choose no salt added regular canned vegetables, vegetable juices, soups, sauces, and gravies. Most frozen vegetables without sauces are low in sodium.
- Choose fresh or frozen lean cuts of meat, fish, and poultry.
- Season your food with herbs and spices instead of salt.

Choose More Often:

- Chicken and turkey (take off skin)
- Lean cuts of meat
- Fish: Fresh or frozen
- Skim or 1% milk, evaporated skim milk
- Cheese: lower or reduced in sodium
- Loaf breads, dinner rolls, English muffin, bagels, pita, and salt-free chips
- Cereals: some hot cereals and some ready-to-eat cold cereals lowest in sodium*
- Plain rice and noodles
- Fresh, frozen, or no salt added canned vegetables
- Fruits
- Soups: lower or reduced in sodium
- Margarine, vegetable oils
- Spices, herbs, and flavorings like oregano, garlic powder, onion powder, salt free seasoning blends, vinegar, and fruit juices

Choose Less Often:

- Hogmaws, ribs, and chitterlings
- Smoked or cured meats like bacon, bologna, hot dogs, ham, corned beef, luncheon meats, and sausage
- Canned fish like tuna, salmon, sardines, and mackerel**
- Buttermilk+
- Most cheese spreads and cheeses
- Salty chips, nuts, pretzels, or pork rinds
- Some cold (ready to eat) cereals highest in sodium, instant hot cereals
- Quick cooking rice and instant noodles, boxed mixes like rice, scalloped potatoes, macaroni and cheese, ++ and some frozen dinners, pot pies and pizza*
- Regular canned vegetables**
- Pickled foods like herring, pickles, relish, olives, or sauerkraut
- Regular canned soups, instant soups
- Butter, fatback, and salt pork
- Soy sauce, steak sauce, salad dressing, ketchup, barbecue sauce, garlic salt, onion salt, seasoned salts like lemon pepper, bouillon cubes, meat tenderizer, and monosodium glutamate (MSG)*



* *Read the food label to choose those lower in sodium.*

** *Rinse canned fish or vegetables before using.*

\+ *Although buttermilk is high in sodium, 1 percent or skim buttermilk can be used in cooking to replace whole milk or fat.*

++ *Modify cooking directions and prepare with less salt, if possible.*

Tips to Eating Less Salt and Sodium
Be a smart shopper:

***Read the food label** to find out more about what is in the foods you eat. This will help you choose foods to limit the amount of sodium you eat to 2,400 mg each day.*

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size: 1 cup (228 g)
Serving Per Package 2

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 260	Calories from fat 120
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 13g	20%
Saturated Fat 5g	25%
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 600mg	28%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	

Vitamin A 4% • Vitamin C 2%
Calcium 15% • Iron 4%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Size up your food.

Compare the amounts you eat to the serving size given. If you eat 2 cups and the serving size is 1 cup, you have to double the amounts listed.

Check it out!

1. Here are the amounts of fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol.
2. Use the Percent Daily Value to compare the amounts of total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol among brands. Choose those that have lower values. One serving of this food contains about 20 percent of the Daily Value for total fat, which is about one-fifth of the amount of total fat you should have for the entire day.

Buy foods with these claims more often. The food label may include terms such as:

- sodium free
- very low sodium
- low sodium
- reduced (or less) sodium
- light in sodium
- unsalted

Take the lead at the table.

- Remove the salt shaker. Keep the pepper shaker.
- Taste the food first. If you must add salt, use one "shake" instead of two or more.
- Cut down on the amount of salty prepared sauces or condiments you use.

NATIONAL HEART, LUNG, AND BLOOD INSTITUTE

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Public Health Service
National Institutes of Health
National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
NIH Publication No. 97-4064
September 1997

ORMH OFFICE OF RESEARCH ON MINORITY HEALTH

For more information contact AAHC at 503-413-1850
or visit the AAHC website at www.aahc-portland.org