

Food Bytes

HEALTH & NUTRITION PROGRAM, SNAP EDUCATION

 UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA | EXTENSION



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Where Does Salt Come From?



Most people will say that they do not eat a lot of salt because they do not use the salt shaker. What they don't realize is that 75% of the salt they eat comes from processed foods and meals eaten away from home.

Where is Sodium Found in My Diet?

Sodium is in many of the foods you eat. It may occur naturally in a food or be added during processing, cooking, or at the table. Most sodium added during processing comes from salt, but other ingredients and additives used by manufacturers contain sodium as well.

With the reliance on processed foods such as bread, canned goods, bottled sauces and dressings, frozen foods and restaurant meals comes a price of higher sodium.

Watch out for commercially prepared condiments, sauces, and seasonings when preparing and serving foods for you and your family. Many, like those below, are **high** in sodium.

Onion salt	Celery salt	Garlic salt
Seasoned salt	Meat tenderizer	Bouillon
Baking powder	Baking soda	Lemon pepper
Soy sauce	Steak sauce	Barbecue sauce
Catsup	Mustard	Relish
Salad dressings	Pickles	Chili sauce
Monosodium glutamate (msg)		
Worcestershire sauce		

Reading a Label for Salt

Here is a quick label reading tip to determine if a food is low in sodium. If a food contains 5 percent or less of the Daily Value for sodium, then it is a low-sodium food. This generally includes fresh fruits and vegetables, plain rice (brown or white), pasta, dried beans, fresh whole cuts of meat, poultry and fish, and dairy products like yogurt and milk (excludes cheese or buttermilk).

What Is the Difference Between Salt and Sodium?

- Table salt is sodium chloride
- 1,000 mg of salt contains:
 - 400 mg sodium (Na⁺)
 - 600 mg chloride (Cl⁻)

There are other terms to look for on food packaging. These terms indicate a low sodium food:

- Sodium-Free or Salt-Free: less than 5 mg sodium per serving
- Low Sodium: 140 mg or less sodium per serving





Ways to Lower Sodium Intake

- Taste your food before you salt it. Try one shake instead of two.
- Eat more fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables.
- Rinse canned vegetables with running water.
- Eat more meals at home. Cook your own food in batches and freeze for use on hectic days.
- Substitute $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp garlic powder or onion powder for every tsp of garlic or onion salt in recipes.
- Switch from using deli meats to low-sodium tuna and fresh-baked chicken.
- Use lower sodium condiments. Beware of light versions of mustard and soy sauce. They are still high in sodium.
- Make your own soup instead of using canned soup; use low-sodium ingredients.
- Read nutrition facts label to compare sodium content of food—choosing the product with less sodium.
- Buy packaged or canned foods with low-sodium, reduced-sodium or no-salt added on the label.
- Avoid or limit convenience meals. These include boxed mixes, frozen dinners and canned foods.
- Limit salty snacks.
- Use cheese sparingly.
- Limit the amount of cured meats such as sausages and hot dogs.



For a healthy diet, consume less than 2300mg of sodium per day!

Salt-Sodium Conversions

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt = 500 mg sodium
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt = 1000 mg sodium
 $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp salt = 1500 mg sodium
1 tsp salt = 2000 mg sodium



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The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact the MN Food HelpLine at 1-888-711-1151.

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For more health and nutrition information visit our website:
<http://www.extension.umn.edu/family/health-and-nutrition/>