

How to Lower Your Salt Intake

- ▶ Avoid adding salt during cooking or at table.
- ▶ Sea salt and rock salt should also be avoided as they are also high in salt and thus are not good for health.
- ▶ Avoid using other salt flavour enhancers such as stock cubes, gravy and soy sauce.
- ▶ To increase the flavour to your food use fresh, frozen or dried herbs, chilli, garlic, pepper, vinegar and lemon or lime juice.
- ▶ Food eaten outside the home such as takeaways, canteens, cafés and restaurants may be high in salt.
- ▶ Asking for a lower salt option and reading food labels may help you to lower your salt intake.



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Ministry for Health, the Elderly
and Community Care

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SALT

and your

Health

A photograph of a white salt shaker with a silver base, tilted and spilling white salt onto a dark surface.

Salt and Your Health

Your body only needs a small intake of salt. This is due to the negative effects that too much salt may have on your health. A high intake of salt may raise your blood pressure and thus increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. It may also cause bones to become more fragile due to the loss of calcium. This increases the risk of osteoporosis (thinning of bones). A high salt intake is also linked to stomach cancer, obesity and can also worsen the symptoms of asthma.

Due to the health risks mentioned above, it is vital to reduce the amount of salt consumed. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends an intake of no more than 5g of salt a day. This amount is equal to a little less than a teaspoon.



Salt and Your Food

Most of the food we eat contains salt. However some foods have a higher salt content than others. Foods such as bacon, cheese, ham, sausages, savoury snack foods, packet soups, sauces and stock cubes are often very high in salt whereas fresh meat and fish, fruits and vegetables, pasta, rice and plain cottage cheese are food options that are lower in salt.

When shopping it is important to read the food labels in order to know whether the product is high or low in salt. Food labels may sometimes list salt as sodium. They are NOT the same. Salt is made up of sodium and chloride. If a product lists the amount of sodium per 100g, multiplying the amount by 2.5, will give you the amount of salt in the food product.

Sodium X 2.5 = SALT
2 grams Sodium x 2.5 = 5 grams Salt

Salt and Your Cooking

When cooking, you must try to avoid adding salt to your food. It is true that salt gives food its palatability. It therefore must be cut down gradually so that the change in taste is not greatly noticed. Salt can always be replaced by herbs, onions, garlic, peppers, celery and lemon juice.

Initially when you reduce your salt intake, foods tend to taste bland, but after two or three weeks your taste buds become more sensitive to the lower level of salt in the food allowing you to taste the real delicious flavour of natural food.

Salt and Your Eating Out

When eating out, you would not know how much salt there is in the food you ordered. Therefore by choosing those items on the menu that are usually lower in salt and/or asking the chef to add less salt to your food whilst cooking; it is possible to reduce the amount of salt in your food.