



20 Ways to Lower Sodium Intake

Your daily sodium intake should be less than 2300 mg. from all foods, beverages and seasonings. Read the nutrition labels and try to choose foods that contain less than 250 mg. sodium per serving.

The best way to reduce sodium in your diet is to:

- Cook from scratch. Limit the use of ready to eat, fast food or prepackaged foods.
- Use the salt shaker sparingly. Taste your food before adding salt.
- Remove the salt shaker from your table or get a shaker with smaller holes.
- Choose fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables without added salt. If you are using canned vegetables, drain and rinse them before cooking in fresh water.
- Choose fresh or frozen fish, shellfish, poultry, and meat more often than processed forms.
- Snack on fresh fruits and vegetables, which are low in sodium.
- Limit processed, cured, smoked or pickled foods.
- Read the 'Nutrition Facts Label' to compare the amount of sodium in processed foods such as frozen dinners, packaged mixes, cereals, cheese, breads, soups, salad dressings, and sauces. The amount of sodium in different types and brands often varies widely.
- Ask your grocer or supermarket to offer more low-sodium foods.

- Read ingredient labels for sodium, monosodium glutamate (MSG), baking soda and other sodium-containing compounds.
- Choose foods labeled "low-sodium," "reduced sodium" or "sodium free."
- Look at the sodium content of your favorite condiments, particularly meat tenderizer, steak sauce, soy sauce, salsa, and catsup.
- Use fresh or salt-free spices and herbs to season your food such as garlic powder, celery seed, dill weed and dried onion flakes.
- Try fresh vegetable and citrus juices as seasoning for sauces and marinades.
- Some people can use salt substitutes. These are high in potassium so people with kidney or other medical problems may not be able to use them. Ask your physician first.
- Try salt free seasoning mixes such as Mrs. Dash® or Mr. Pepper®.
- Choose over the counter drugs that are low in sodium. Ask your pharmacist about the sodium content of the medicines you are taking.
- When you go out to eat, choose low sodium menu items and ask that they prepare your meal without salt or MSG.
- Use pepper instead of salt to season your meal.
- Ask for gravies and sauces to be served on the side so you can use smaller portions.

Contact your local VA dietitian for more information.

