

2 Gram (2,000 mg) Sodium Meal Plan

Planning your daily meals

Knowing what foods are high in sodium can help you stay within your sodium limit. One teaspoon of regular table salt (sodium chloride) contains over 2,000 milligrams (mg) of sodium. This is more than the amount of sodium you are allowed in a day.

This handout gives tips to help you stick with your low-sodium meal plan.

Basic Tips

- Instead of using table salt to flavor foods, try using fresh herbs and spices, lemon juice, or vinegar.
- Adapt your foods to low-sodium versions. There are many low-sodium cookbooks you can buy and low-sodium recipes online.
- Try making meals from scratch instead of buying prepared or prepackaged foods.
- Choose foods that are naturally low in sodium. These include fresh fruits and vegetables, dried grains, and grilled or baked fresh meats and fish.
- Learn how to read food labels. Always check the sodium content.
- Keep a food log. See the references at the end of this handout for websites that may help.



Use herbs, spices, vinegar, or other flavorings instead of salt.

Use Less Salt in Recipes

- For most recipes, you can use half as much salt as the recipe calls for without changing the flavor very much. (This may not be true for some baking recipes that contain yeast.)
- Use fresh or dried herbs and spices instead of salt to add flavor.

- Use “low-sodium” baking powder instead of regular baking powder. This reduces sodium by about 500 mg per teaspoon.
- Use fresh roasted pork instead of ham in recipes.
- Make foods from scratch. For example:
 - A homemade pizza made with an English muffin, low-sodium pasta sauce, mozzarella cheese, grilled chicken, and vegetables has about 450 mg sodium.
 - ½ of a frozen pizza with meat and vegetables has more than 1,000 mg sodium.

Packaged Foods

How Sodium Is Listed on a Nutrition Facts Label

The amount of sodium in a serving size is listed in milligrams (mg) on a Nutrition Facts label on packaged foods.

For example, a 1-cup serving of a product has 660 mg of sodium. If you are on a 2,000 mg (2 gm) sodium diet, this is ⅓ of your daily allowance.

On the left is a sample Nutrition Facts label that shows where to look for the sodium content. Be sure to note the serving size. If you eat 2 servings of the food, you have eaten 2 times the sodium shown on the label.

| Nutrition Facts | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Serving Size 1 Shake (11 fl oz) | |
| Servings Per Container 12 | |
| Amount Per Serving | |
| Calories 160 | Calories from Fat 25 |
| % Daily Value* | |
| Total Fat 3g | 5% |
| Saturated Fat 1g | 5% |
| Trans Fat 0g | |
| Cholesterol 20mg | 7% |
| Sodium 210mg | 9% |
| Potassium 450mg | 13% |
| Total Carbohydrate 5g | 2% |
| Dietary Fiber 3g | 12% |
| Sugars 1g | |
| Protein 30g | 60% |

Sample Nutrition Facts label showing sodium content

Sodium Claims

Sodium claims are often printed on food labels to help you make good choices. This list gives the meaning of various claims. It will help you choose the products that are right for you and your diet.

| Claim | Definition |
|--|---|
| <i>Sodium Free</i> | Less than 5 mg sodium per serving |
| <i>Salt Free</i> | Product meets requirements for “sodium free” |
| <i>Very Low Sodium</i> | 35 mg or less sodium per serving |
| <i>Low Sodium</i> | 140 mg or less sodium per serving |
| <i>Reduced or Less Sodium</i> | At least 25% less sodium per serving than the regular product |
| <i>Light in Sodium</i> | 50% less sodium per serving than the regular product |
| <i>Unsalted, No Salt Added, Without Added Salt</i> | No salt is added during processing |



Choose restaurants that serve low-sodium options.

Tips for Eating Out

- Try eating at salad bars:
 - Choose fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs, and grilled chicken.
 - Limit high-sodium foods such as cheeses, salted nuts, chopped deli meats, and pasta salads.
 - Try oil and vinegar or lemon juice for dressing. Avoid regular or “lite” dressings – they are usually very high in sodium.
- Ask your server for:
 - Salad dressings and sauces on the side
 - Grilled meats with no salt added
 - Nutrition information about foods on the menu

Many large chain restaurants now have nutrition information available at the restaurants and online.
- Choose restaurants that serve low-sodium options, such as fresh grilled meat and stir-fried vegetables without soy sauce. Most Asian, Italian, Mexican, and other ethnic foods can be very high in sodium.
- Limit your portion size. Try eating half the entrée and having a side salad with oil and vinegar. This will greatly reduce your sodium intake.

Food Tables

The food tables on the next page divide foods into 3 groups:

- Foods that are OK to eat on a low-sodium diet
- Foods that you can eat once in a while on a low-sodium diet
- Foods to avoid on a low-sodium diet

Use these tables to help choose foods for your low-sodium meal plan.

| Food Groups | OK to Eat <i>Choose these foods every day. One serving has less than 100 mg sodium.</i> | Eat Sometimes <i>Choose these foods once in a while. One serving has less than 300 mg sodium.</i> | Avoid These Foods <i>Choose these foods rarely. One serving has more than 300 mg of sodium.</i> |
|---|---|--|---|
| Fruits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All fruits and fruit juices | | |
| Vegetables | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables with no salt or sauces added | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most canned vegetables with salt Low-sodium tomato and V-8 juice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular tomato or V-8 juice Ready-to-eat tomato sauces Pickled foods like sauerkraut, olives, and pickles |
| Meats and Other Protein Foods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh meats, poultry, and fish (no salt added) Clams and mussels, steamed Unsalted peanut butter and nuts Tuna fish, canned without added salt Dried beans or peas, cooked without salt Tofu Eggs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peanut butter Shellfish, not treated with salt Canned beans Frozen meals with less than 300 mg sodium | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuna fish, canned with added salt Fried foods Salted, smoked, cured, or canned meats Lunch deli meats Spam Corned beef Hot dogs and sausage Jerky Ham and bacon Frozen meals with more than 600 mg sodium |
| Dairy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unsalted butter Unsalted cottage cheese Milk and yogurt | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buttermilk Lower sodium cheeses like mozzarella, Swiss, cheddar, ricotta | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-sodium cheeses like feta, bleu, and goat cheese Cottage cheese |
| Cereals, Grains, and Starches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plain hot cereal Shredded wheat or puffed rice cereal Unsalted corn tortillas, granola, quick breads Low-sodium breads Rice, pasta, whole grains, cooked without salt Unsalted potatoes and squash | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salted crackers and pretzels Most cold cereals Most breads and muffins Pancakes and waffles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stuffing mixes Cornbread Rice or noodles prepared with flavor packets |
| Spices, Seasonings, and Condiments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh or dried herbs Powders, not salts (for example, use onion and garlic powder instead of onion and garlic salt) Tabasco (no more than 1 tablespoon) Vinegar, lemon and lime juice Fresh garlic Sesame seeds Allspice Mrs. Dash and Lawry's salt-free seasonings Flavored extracts like vanilla and almond | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some hot sauces (check label for sodium content) Mayonnaise Mustard Low-sodium ketchup | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most canned soups Bouillon cubes and prepared broths Sauces: teriyaki, soy, fish, Worcestershire Sea salt, regular salt Baking soda (regular) Garlic, onion, and other flavored or seasoned salts Relishes Monosodium glutamate (MSG) Meat tenderizers Ketchup and barbecue sauce All seasoning packets Salad dressing Cheese sauce mixes, such as Alfredo sauce Olives Some hot sauces |

Other Resources

Websites

These websites provide tools to help you keep track of your sodium intake:

- www.myfitnesspal.com
- www.livestrong.com
- USDA nutrient database: <http://ndb.nal.usda.gov/>

Books

- *Pocket Guide to Low Sodium Foods*, by Bobbie Mostyn
- *The Complete Book of Food Counts* (8th Edition), by Corinne Netzer

Low-Sodium Cookbooks

- *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Low Sodium Meals*, by Shelly Vaughn James and Heidi McIndoo, RD
- *No-Salt, Lowest-Sodium Cookbook*, by Donald Gazzaniga
- *500 Low Sodium Recipes – Lose the Salt, Not the Flavor in Meals the Whole Family Will Love*, by Dick Logue
- *Get the Salt Out: 501 Simple Ways to Cut the Salt Out of Any Diet*, by Ann Louise Gittleman
- *Cooking Without a Grain of Salt*, by Elma W. Bagg, Susan Bagg Todd, and Robert Ely Bagg

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Your Dietitian or Diet Technician:
