

Eating the Right Amount of Sodium

While you are pregnant

This handout gives tips to help you eat the right amount of sodium during pregnancy.

Eating whole (unprocessed) foods will naturally control the sodium you get from food. When buying packaged foods, always check the sodium content on the Nutrition Facts label to help you make healthy choices.



Whole foods are naturally low in sodium.

During pregnancy, you need about 2,300 mg of sodium (salt) a day. It is easy to eat too much sodium, especially if you eat processed or restaurant foods, which are usually made with a lot of salt. Asian, Italian, Mexican, and other restaurant foods are often very salty.

Foods and Sodium Content

Use this table to help you make healthy food choices.

Food	Foods to Eat	Foods to Avoid
Dairy	Milk, yogurt, some cheese, buttermilk, soymilk	Cottage cheese, processed cheese, cheese spreads, blue cheese, feta cheese (be aware of food safety guidelines for listeria risk during pregnancy)
Protein Foods	Fresh, frozen, or unsalted canned meat, fish, shellfish, or poultry; unsalted peanut butter; beans; eggs; tofu; frozen entrees with less than 500 mg per serving	Salted, smoked, cured, canned, or dried meats; lunch meats, hot dogs, salami, sausage, bacon, SPAM, and others; entrees with more than 500 mg sodium (be aware of food safety guidelines for listeria* risk during pregnancy)

** Listeria is a bacteria that is sometimes found in certain foods.*

Food	Foods to Eat	Foods to Avoid
Breads, Cereals, Starches	Cooked or dry cereal, bread, unsalted potatoes, rice, pasta, pancakes, waffles	Salted crackers, potato chips and other types of chips, pretzels, rice or noodles with seasoning packets
Fruits	All fruits and fruit juices are low in sodium	
Vegetables	Fresh, frozen, and “no salt added” canned vegetables	Olives, pickles, sauerkraut, tomato juice, V-8 juice, salted canned vegetables
Fats	Unsalted butter, margarine, sour cream, oils, no-salt salad dressing, shortening	Bacon fat, salted salad dressings, gravies
Desserts	Sherbet, ice cream, pudding, small portions of cake, pie, cookies	Avoid too many desserts; limit or eat sugar-free if you have diabetes
Other	Low-sodium canned soups, unsalted nuts and popcorn, snacks with less than 250 mg sodium per serving	Regular canned, frozen or dehydrated soups, bouillon cubes, seasoning packets, seasoning salts, garlic salt, onion salt, soy sauce, fast food, salted nuts,

Healthy Diet Guidelines

Eating a healthy diet will help you have a healthy pregnancy. And, if you have *hypertension* (high blood pressure), these guidelines may also help control symptoms:

- Eat a healthy diet of fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, *monounsaturated* and omega 3 fats, whole grains, and low-fat dairy foods.
- Eat enough protein, usually 60 to 80 grams a day.
- Eat the right amount of calories for your height and weight.
- Keep your sodium intake at no more than 2 to 3 grams (2,000 to 3,000 mg) a day.
- Make sure your calcium intake is about 1,200 mg a day. This is about 4 servings of dairy foods.

Questions?

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

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