

# Patient Education

Maternal and Infant Care Clinic



# Eating the Right Amount of Sodium

*While you are pregnant*

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

Eating unprocessed (whole) foods will naturally control the sodium you get from food. And, checking the sodium content on the Nutrition Facts label on packaged foods will help you make healthy choices.

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 foods that are high in salt or restaurant foods that usually are made with a lot of salt. For example, Asian, Italian, Mexican, and other ethnic foods are often very salty.

## Foods and Sodium Content

Use this table to help you make healthy food choices.

Food Group	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 <i>listeria</i> risk during pregnancy)
Protein Foods	Fresh, frozen, or unsalted canned meat, fish, shellfish, or poultry; 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 <i>listeria</i> risk during pregnancy)
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

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

*Table is continued on the next page.*

## Questions?

Call 206-598-4622 to contact your Maternal and Infant Care Clinic Dietitian.

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

Maternal and Infant Care Clinic:  
206-598-4070

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Food Group	Foods to Eat	Foods to Avoid
<b>Fruits</b>	All fruits and fruit juices are low in sodium	
<b>Vegetables</b>	Fresh, frozen, and “no salt added” canned vegetables	Olives, pickles, sauerkraut, tomato juice, V-8 juice, salted canned vegetables
<b>Fats</b>	Unsalted butter, margarine, sour cream, oils, no-salt salad dressing, shortening	Bacon fat, salted salad dressings, gravies
<b>Desserts</b>	Sherbet, ice cream, pudding, small portions of cake, pie, cookies	Avoid too many desserts; limit or use sugar-free if you have diabetes
<b>Other</b>	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, salted nuts, seasoning packets, seasoning salts, garlic salt, onion salt, soy sauce, fast food

## 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 dairy servings a day.

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