

## Steps to Less Salt

Sodium causes the body to retain fluid, one thing that contributes to high blood pressure and stroke. Experts recommend limiting sodium to 2,300 milligrams per day - the equivalent of about 1 tsp of table salt.

1. **Cook with less salt.** To avoid salt without sacrificing flavor, experiment by making your own seasoning blends.

Chinese five-spice blend for chicken, fish, or pork. Combine  $\frac{1}{4}$  c ground ginger, ground cinnamon, 2 tsp ground cloves, and 1 tbl each ground all spice.

Mexican blend for chili, enchiladas, and tacos. Combine  $\frac{1}{4}$  c chili powder, 1 tbl each ground cumin and onion powder, 1 tsp each dried oregano, garlic powder, and red pepper.

Mixed herbs for salads, steamed vegies or fish. Combine  $\frac{1}{4}$  c dried parsley, 2 tbl dried tarragon, and 1 tbl each dried oregano, dill weed, and celery flakes.

2. **Pass Up Processed Foods.** 75% of salt intake comes from processed food. Some food companies are developing products with less sodium, so keep an eye out for sodium listed on food labels. Only small amounts of sodium occur naturally in foods, eating mostly natural, [whole foods](#) will help keep levels of sodium down.
3. **Cut Back on Condiments.** Always dress your sandwiches and burgers yourself. This way, you can not only control the amounts of condiments used, you can choose those that are lower in calories, fat, and sodium, such as:

- Balsamic vinegar. 2 teaspoons has 14 calories, 0 grams fat, and 2 milligrams sodium
- Mustard. 1 teaspoon has 10 calories, 0 grams fat, and 100 milligrams sodium
- Pickle relish. 1 tablespoon has 21 calories, 0 grams fat, and 109 milligrams sodium
- Horseradish. 2 teaspoons has 4 calories, 0 grams fat, and 10 milligrams sodium
- Low-sodium light mayonnaise. 17 calories, 1.3 grams fat, and 27 milligrams sodium (the numbers may vary depending on brand).
- Lemon juice (from 1/2 lemon). 8 calories, 0 grams fat, and 1 milligram sodium

Feel free to load on all the lettuce, tomato, and onion your heart desires. Each adds 5 calories or less per serving, and is mostly sodium-free.

4. **Beware of Dressings and Sauces.** If you think a little bit of dressing or sauce won't add that much sodium to your meal, think again. Take a gander at some of the dressing offered at fast-food restaurants:

Creamy Southwest Dressing (71-gram serving): 1,060 milligrams sodium

Bacon Ranch Dressing (71-gram serving): 810 milligrams sodium

Asian Sesame Dressing (71-gram serving): 780 milligrams sodium

5. **Opt for Alternatives.** Purchase a battery-operated pepper grinder and your favorite flavor of salt-free herb and spice blend (like Mrs. Dash). Then keep them front and center on your kitchen table to help you break the habit of salting your food.
6. **Forgo Fast Food.** Eating at fast-food chains may be fast and cheap, but you pay the price in calories, fat, and sodium. Many fast-food items are big on sodium. The following items topped the sodium scale:

#### 4 Must-See Articles

- [Slideshow: Which Organic Foods Are Worth the Extra Cost?](#)
- [Cholesterol Confusion? Take the Health Check](#)
- [Pain in the Mouth: Oral Problems Slideshow](#)
- [Quiz: Can You Spot the Best Food Choices?](#)

#### Wendy's

- Homestyle Chicken Strips (3) with dipping sauce: 1,690-1,890 milligrams sodium, depending on sauce
- Frescata Club Sandwich: 1,610 milligrams
- Frescata Italiana Sandwich: 1,530 milligrams
- Roasted Turkey & Swiss Frescata Sandwich: 1,520 milligrams
- Big Bacon Classic Sandwich: 1,510 milligrams

#### McDonald's

- Deluxe Breakfast: 1,920 milligrams sodium
- Premium Crispy Chicken Club Sandwich: 1,830 milligrams
- Premium Crispy Chicken Ranch BLT Sandwich: 1,750 milligrams
- Premium Grilled Chicken Club Sandwich: 1,690 milligrams
- Big Breakfast: 1,470 milligrams
- Sausage, Egg, & Cheese McGriddle: 1,300 milligrams