

Fact Sheet

Central Adelaide Local Health Network
Diabetes Education Service

Salt



What is salt?

Sodium is found in most foods as sodium chloride, generally known as 'salt'. Too much salt in the diet can raise blood pressure, putting you at increased risk of health problems such as heart disease and stroke.

You don't have to add salt to food to be eating too much. Around three quarters of the salt we eat is already in everyday foods such as bread, breakfast cereal and other processed foods (See Diagram 1 below).

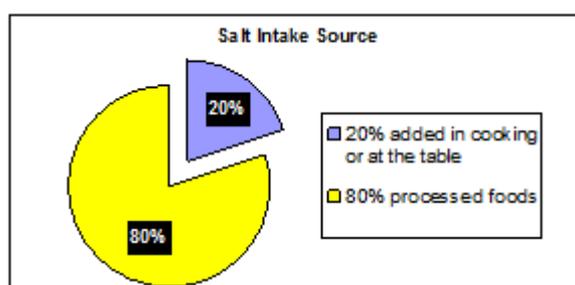


Diagram 1

How much salt does an adult need?

The recommended amount of salt is 5 grams per day (equal to 2,000mg sodium). This is about one teaspoon of salt.

The average Australian consumes much more than the recommended 5 grams of salt per day, up to 14 grams of salt per day (equal to 5,500mg sodium) mostly from processed foods.

Who needs to cut back on salt?

Most people should cut back on salt. Cutting down on salt can reduce blood pressure which in turn can lower your risk of heart disease and stroke.

People over 65 years and/or with high blood pressure, diabetes, kidney disease, or those who are overweight tend to be more sensitive to the effects of salt. A low salt intake can reduce the risk of health problems and help those with high blood pressure, heart disease or kidney disease.

How do I cut back on salt?

Step 1: Go slow on the salt

- > Don't add salt to cooking and at the table. Steam or microwave your vegetables without salt. Cook pasta, rice and potatoes without salt. Taste the real flavour of food.
- > Cut back slowly on the salt to let your taste buds get used to less salt.
- > When sitting down to eat, taste your food first to see if salt is needed.



Step 2: Choose low salt foods

- > Read labels. Look for foods with less than 120mg sodium per 100g (excellent choice) or less than 400mg sodium per 100g (good choice).
- > Limit or avoid very high salt foods like processed meats, jar & packet sauces, packet soups, gravy powder, stock cubes & powder, potato chips/crisps, salted nuts & other salty snack foods, anchovies, olives, flavoured crackers and most takeaways.
- > Choose 'low salt', 'no added salt' or 'reduced salt' foods when you can.
- > Eat a wide variety of foods from the different food groups.

| NUTRITION INFORMATION PANEL | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|----------|
| | Per Serve | Per 100g |
| Energy - kilojoules | 284 kJ | 97 cal |
| Protein | 5.3g | 7.5g |
| Fat - total | 0.4g | 0.6g |
| -saturated | 0g | 0g |
| Carbohydrate –total | 14.9 g | 21.3g |
| -sugars | 1.8g | 2.5g |
| Dietary Fibre | 4.3g | 6.2g |
| Sodium | 28mg | 120mg |

Sodium (Salt)

Aim for less than 400mg per 100g and if possible less than 120mg per 100g

Look for 'no added salt' or 'salt reduced'

Step 3: Savour the flavour without salt

- > Flavour can be added or increased in dishes by using the following:
 - Flavours: garlic, horseradish, mustard, vinegars
 - Fresh/dried herbs: coriander, dill, oregano, parsley, rosemary, thyme
 - Fruit or fruit juice: lemon, lime, orange, wine
 - Spices: Cardamom, chilli, cinnamon, cloves, cumin, ginger, paprika, pepper

Step 4: Be aware of salt in disguise

- > Most salt substitutes on the market (e.g. No Salt or Lite Salt) still contain a lot of sodium. Others contain salt/sodium in another form. These are not recommended. Check with your dietitian or doctor before using any salt substitute.
- > Salt is salt! Other types of salt are just the same as ordinary salt. These include: celery salt, chicken salt, garlic salt, onion salt, pink salt, rock salt, sea salt and monosodium glutamate (MSG).

Reference: <https://www.nrv.gov.au/nutrients/sodium>

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The information contained within the publication does not constitute medical advice, and is for general information only. Readers should always seek independent, professional advice where appropriate.

For more information

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