



health & living

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## tip:

*When cooking, use herbs and spices to flavor your foods instead of salt. Make an attempt to taste food before shaking on additional salt.*

## Shaking the Salt Habit

Do you reach for the salt shaker before tasting your food? Do your meals often include canned or processed foods? If you answered yes, there's a chance you're eating too much salt-and unknowingly putting your health at risk.

But you're not alone. Most people consume fifty percent more than the amount of salt their body requires. According to the American Heart Association, adults should limit their daily consumption of sodium to 2400 milligrams. Sounds like a lot, right? Actually, it's the equivalent of about one teaspoon of regular table salt, and you can get almost half this in just one bowl of many store-bought soups!

Studies have shown that some people's blood pressure is strongly influenced by the amount of sodium in their diet. As you may know, the higher your salt intake, the greater your risk of high blood pressure (hypertension). Limiting your salt intake can reduce your chances of cardiovascular disease, heart attack, stroke and kidney failure.

Taken in proper amounts, salt is actually a necessary part of your diet. Our bodies need it to maintain blood volume, regulate water balance, and help the nervous system work properly. So please read on, because being aware of your salt intake and knowing how to control it is most of the battle.

## Ways to Limit Salt

There are some very simple ways to reduce your salt intake:

1. When cooking, add herbs and spices instead of salt to add flavor to your meal.
2. Taste your food before adding any salt-there's a good chance it tastes just fine without it. And if you must use the salt shaker, use a light hand.
3. Read food labels and consider buying products that specifically say "Low in sodium." These options are more common than you may think. But be careful! Salt



may be hard to detect --it has many names. It can be referred to on labels as

- Sodium
- monosodium glutamate (MSG)
- sodium nitrate
- sodium nitrite
- sodium bicarbonate
- sodium phosphate

4. Be aware of the amount of salt in your diet; try keeping a log of your salt intake. There are some very common foods and ingredients that you'd be surprised to learn are high in sodium.

The following sections provide a list of those foods high in sodium, along with some tasty alternatives.

### **High-Sodium Foods**

- Bouillon
- Fast foods
- Frozen foods
- Hard cheeses
- Ketchup, mustard
- Lunch meats
- Monosodium glutamate (often found in Chinese food)
- Olives
- Pickles
- Processed and canned foods (such as soups and sauces)
- Sausage
- Soy sauce
- Snack foods such as peanuts, salted popcorn, pretzels, potato chips

### **Low-Sodium Substitutes**

- Fruits and vegetables
- Fresh fish, poultry, and meat-instead of canned or processed meats
- Low-salt fresh turkey
- Unsalted vegetable chips and low-salt versions of potato chips, pretzels, peanuts, and other nuts
- Fresh tomato sauce
- Chinese food prepared without MSG (this may require a special request)
- Low-sodium soy sauce
- Herbs such as basil, cilantro, rosemary, and crushed garlic



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Note: This website cannot replace regular conversations with your doctor or health care professional.



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