

Department of
Nutrition & Dietetics

Reducing Sodium Intake



Sodium

Sodium helps to regulate fluids in the body. Therefore, it has a major role in controlling blood volume and blood pressure.

You are recommended to limit your sodium intake if you have:

1) Hypertension (High Blood Pressure)

Eating too much sodium causes retention of water, including water in your blood vessels. This raises your blood pressure.

2) Heart Failure

Heart failure is a medical condition where the heart cannot pump blood well to the rest of the body. Eating too much sodium causes your body to retain too much fluid, worsening the fluid build-up that already happens with heart failure. This causes swelling and difficulty breathing.

3) Kidney Disease

One of the functions of the kidneys is to remove excess fluids from the body. Eating too much sodium causes the body to retain too much fluid, worsening the fluid build-up that already happens with kidney disease. This causes swelling and difficulty breathing.

4) Liver Cirrhosis (Hardening/Scarring of the Liver)

Eating too much sodium worsens ascites (build-up of fluid in the abdominal area) that already happens with liver cirrhosis.

Even if you do not have any of the above medical conditions, limiting sodium intake is still helpful as it reduces your risk of developing medical conditions such as heart disease and kidney disease.

Daily Recommended Sodium/Salt Intake

The daily recommended sodium intake is less than 2000mg per day.
2000mg of sodium = 5g of salt = 1 teaspoon of salt.

About 40% of salt is made up of sodium, with the remaining 60% being chloride.

Sodium is a mineral found naturally in foods, but most of the sodium in our diet comes from seasonings added during cooking and from processed foods.

Seasonings/sauces:



*Salt, chicken/ikan bilis stock,
soya/oyster sauce*

*Chilli/tomato sauce, pastes and
other sauces*

Preserved/canned foods:



*Salted eggs/fish,
ikan bilis*

*Instant noodles, canned foods,
snacks e.g. prawn crackers and
potato chips*

*Processed meats e.g.
ham, bacon and
sausages*

Tips to Reduce Sodium/Salt Intake When Eating at Home

1. Choose fresh food instead of processed/preserved foods (e.g. salted egg, salted fish, luncheon meat, ham, sausages and fishballs).



Processed food



Fresh food

2. If you have to choose processed food, look out for food labels such as "low sodium", "sodium free", "unsalted" and "no salt added".



Do note that some foods labelled "reduced sodium" or "no added salt" may still contain high levels of sodium.

Tips to Reduce Sodium/Salt Intake When Eating at Home

- Limit high sodium seasonings and replace them with lower sodium seasonings to flavour food.

Type of high sodium seasonings	Estimated sodium content per teaspoon of seasoning (mg)
Table salt / Himalayan salt / Bamboo salt / Sea salt	2000
Monosodium Glutamate (MSG)	600
Fish sauce	500
Soy sauce / Tom yum paste / Curry paste	400
Lower sodium soy sauce	200
Oyster sauce / Laksa paste	150
Chilli sauce / Tomato sauce	50



High sodium seasonings



Herbs, spices, lemon, lime, garlic, ginger, onion, lemongrass, fresh chilli, pepper, vinegar, sesame oil

- Using a salt substitute is a good way to lower sodium intake.




Many salt substitutes contain potassium chloride instead of sodium chloride.

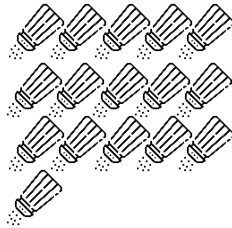
Do be mindful that taking too much potassium may be harmful to people with kidney disease.

Tips to Reduce Sodium/Salt Intake When Eating Out

Many outside foods and snacks are high in sodium. Here are some tips to reduce sodium intake when eating out:

Note: 1  = 500mg of sodium.

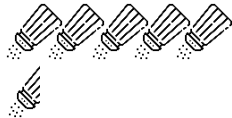
I. Skip the gravy and soup.



Laksa, with gravy = 8000mg sodium



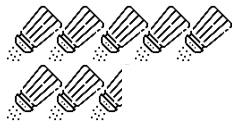
Laksa, without gravy = 1600mg sodium



Mee siam, with gravy = 2800mg sodium



Mee siam, without gravy = 1000mg sodium



Fishball noodle soup = 3800mg sodium



Sliced fish noodle soup = 1800mg sodium




Meatball pasta (tomato base) = 1400mg sodium



Aglio olio = 800mg sodium

Tips to Reduce Sodium/Salt Intake When Eating Out

Note: 1  = 500mg of sodium.

2. Skip the sauce. Otherwise, ask for sauce to be served on the side.



Chee cheong fun, with sauce
= 600mg sodium

Chee cheong fun, without sauce
= 0mg sodium


3. Ask for your side dishes to be taken from the top of the pile and request for no sauce or gravy. Request for less salt if possible.



4. Choose fresh foods instead of processed/preserved foods (e.g. salted egg, salted fish, luncheon meat, ham, sausages and fishballs).



Tips to Reduce Sodium/Salt Intake When Eating Out

Note: 1  = 500mg of sodium.

5. Choose snacks that are lower in sodium.

High sodium snacks



1 pork floss bun = 1200mg sodium



1 chicken curry puff (115g) = 400mg sodium



1 roti john (250g) = 2000mg sodium



1 packet potato chips (80g) = 400mg sodium



1 large french fries (140g) = 400mg sodium



1 slice raisin bread = 0mg sodium



1 piece fruit or vegetable sticks = 0mg sodium



1 plain thosai (45g) = 200mg sodium




3 pieces low sodium crackers = 0mg sodium



1 baked potato, plain (202g) = 0mg sodium

Tips to Reduce Sodium/Salt Intake When Eating Out

It is also important to ensure that your daily total sodium intake is less than 2000mg (). Meals prepared at home and low sodium snacks can help you achieve this.

All store-bought meals

Only store-bought meal for lunch

Mee rebus
(2200mg sodium)

Breakfast

2 pieces bread with egg
(200mg sodium)

1 chicken curry puff
(400mg sodium)

Morning Tea

3 pieces low-sodium
crackers + 1 piece fruit
(0mg sodium)

Brown rice with vegetables,
fried egg and stir-fried
chicken (600mg sodium)

Lunch

Brown rice with vegetables,
fried egg and stir-fried
chicken (600mg sodium)

1 packet potato chips (80g)
(400mg sodium)

Afternoon Tea

1 baked potato, plain
(0mg sodium)

Chicken biryani
(1400mg sodium)

Dinner

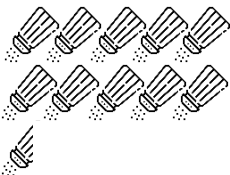
Macaroni soup (made using
chicken bones and 1g salt -
400mg sodium) with
chicken and bok choy

1 piece egg prata
(400mg sodium)

Supper

1 tub low fat yoghurt +
1 piece of fruit
(0mg sodium)

Total sodium intake: 5400mg



Total sodium intake: 1200mg



Clinics B2
TTSH Medical Centre, Level B2
Contact:
6256 6011 (General Enquiries)



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