

Department of
Nutrition & Dietetics

Reducing Sodium Intake When Eating Out



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)

Excessive sodium intake causes retention of water, including water in the blood vessels. This raises blood pressure.

2) Heart Failure

Heart failure is a medical condition in which the heart cannot pump blood effectively to the rest of the body. Excessive sodium intake causes the 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. Excessive sodium intake 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)

Excessive sodium intake worsens ascites (accumulation of fluid in the abdominal cavity) that already happens with liver cirrhosis.

Even if you do not have any of the above medical conditions, limiting sodium intake is still beneficial as it reduces the 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. This is equivalent to less than 5g salt (1 teaspoon) per day.

About 40% of salt is composed of sodium, with the remaining 60% being chloride. Based on the Health Promotion Board's 2018 National Nutrition Survey, the average daily intake of salt of Singaporeans increased to 9g from 8.3g in 2010.

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

S s/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



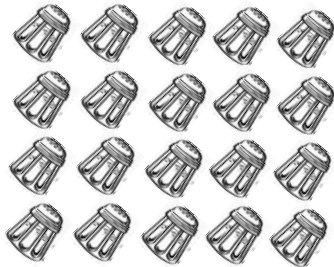
Processed meats e.g. ham, bacon and sausages

Tips to Reduce Sodium/Salt Intake When Eating Out

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

Note: 1  = 1g of salt. *All values are rounded off to the nearest 0.5g.

1. Skip the gravy and soup.



Laksa, with gravy = 20g salt



Laksa, without gravy = 4g salt



Mee siam, with gravy = 7g salt



Mee siam, without gravy = 2.5g salt

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



Chee cheong fun, with sauce = 1.5g salt



Chee cheong fun, without sauce = 0g salt

Tips to Reduce Sodium/Salt Intake When Eating Out

Note: 1  = 1g of salt. *All values are rounded off to the nearest 0.5g.

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

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5. Choose snacks that are lower in sodium.

High sodium snacks 



1 pork floss bun = 3g salt



1 chicken curry puff (115g) = 1g salt



1 roti john (250g) = 5g salt



1 packet potato chips (80g) = 1g salt



1 large french fries (140g) = 1g salt

Low sodium snacks 



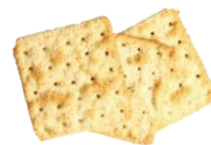
1 slice raisin bread = 0g salt



1 piece fruit or vegetable sticks = 0g salt



1 plain thosai (45g) = 0.5g salt




3 pieces low sodium crackers = 0g salt



1 baked potato, plain (202g) = 0g salt

Tips to Reduce Sodium/Salt Intake When Eating Out

It is also important to ensure that your total salt intake is less than 5g () daily. 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 (5.5g salt)

Breakfast

2 pieces bread with egg (0.5g salt)

1 chicken curry puff (1g salt)

Morning Tea

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

Brown rice with vegetables, fried egg and stir-fried chicken (1.5g salt)

Lunch

Brown rice with vegetables, fried egg and stir-fried chicken (1.5g salt)

1 packet potato chips (80g) (1g salt)

Afternoon Tea

1 baked potato, plain (0g salt)

Chicken biryani (3.5g)

Dinner

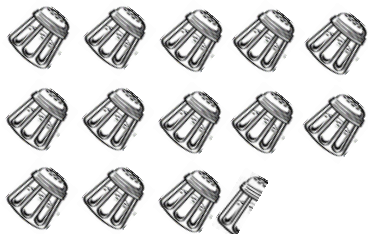
Macaroni soup (made using chicken bones and 1g salt) with chicken and bok choy

1 piece egg prata (1g)

Supper

1 tub low fat yoghurt + 1 piece of fruit (0g salt)

Total salt intake: 13.5g



Total salt intake: 3g



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