

Fact Sheet

Salt (Sodium) and Cancer

The American Institute for Cancer Research published the Second Expert Report on Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity and the Prevention of Cancer: a Global Perspective in 2007. It is an evidence based report giving recommendations based on current research. They made eight recommendations for cancer prevention. One of the eight recommendations is something that many people overlook.

Limit consumption of salty foods and foods processed with salt (sodium).

Most people know that consuming too much salt in their diet can increase blood pressure and heart disease risk. **Salt can also increase risk for cancer**, specifically stomach cancer. The AICR panel of experts found that salt and salt-preserved foods probably increase the chance of developing stomach cancer because high salt intake can damage the lining of the stomach.

Updated Recommendations on Sodium

The US Government's Agriculture and Health and Human Services department issued a new version of the dietary guidelines in January 2011. The new recommended sodium intake is less than 1500 mg per day for those who are 51 and older, African Americans, or those with high blood pressure, diabetes or chronic kidney disease. **This affects half of America!** For the other half of the population, the recommendation remains at 2300 mg/day or less.

Must Know Sodium Facts

The first thing to know about sodium is how much our bodies need. Yes, we actually need some sodium for optimal functioning. The minimum amount needed is somewhere between 180 and 500 mg/day. The maximum recommended is 2300mg/day. And the average American 2 years and older consumes nearly 3,500mg of sodium per day. **WOW! That's a problem!**

According to the Center for Science in the Public Interest, salt, at the levels present in the diets of most people, is probably the single most harmful substance in the food supply. Most people can benefit from an honest assessment of how much sodium they are consuming! If we don't know how much we are eating, we can't take the necessary steps to get our sodium consumption under control.

According to the Center for Science in the Public Interest:

- The vast majority--about 77 percent--of sodium comes from processed foods and foods eaten outside the home.
- Many restaurant meals provide more than a whole day's worth of sodium. Thousands of packaged foods provide one-fourth or more of a day's maximum recommended intake.
- Many health and medical organizations have advocated a 50 percent reduction in sodium in processed and restaurant foods over the next 10 years.
- Reducing sodium consumption by half would save an estimated 150,000 lives per year. That in turn would reduce medical care and other costs by roughly \$1.5 trillion over 20 years.

References:

American Institute for Cancer Research [www.aicr.org]
Center for Science in the Public Interest [www.cspinet.org/salt/]
Center for Disease Control [<http://www.cdc.gov/features/dssodium/>]

Practical Tips for Cutting Salt (Sodium)

Since 75 to 80 percent of the sodium we consume is added to food before we open a package or walk into a restaurant, it's not so simple to cut sodium intake. Here are some ways to start cutting out the excess sodium in your diet:

- Cut back on processed food! Replacing one processed food item each day can make a difference. Think of a handful of unsalted nuts instead of a pack of crackers.
- Make your own salad dressing.
- Season your own rice, couscous, or pasta. Don't buy the flavored kind!
- Buy no-salt added canned beans, tuna, and tomatoes. Or use dried, frozen or fresh instead!
- Add salt-free vegetables, beans, or grains to high-sodium packaged or restaurant foods. You not only cut the salt in each serving, you boost the potassium.
- Don't be fooled by the words 'sea salt'. Salt is salt, whether it comes from the sea or the ground.

Restaurant Foods	Sodium
Olive Garden Garden Fresh salad - Be honest, you know you eat more than one serving!	1930mg.
Arby's medium Homestyle Fries	1360mg
Wendy's Sweet & Spicy Asian Boneless Wings	2490mg
Quizno's Baja Chicken Signature Sub, regular size	2090mg
Steak 'N Shake Chili Deluxe, bowl	2560mg
KFC - 1 biscuit	530mg
Subway 6" Turkey Sub w/American cheese and light mayo	1220mg
Applebee's Sizzling Skillet Fajitas (choose from chicken, steak, or shrimp)	6040-6800mg
Burger King BK Veggie Burger	1030mg
Chili's Brownie Sundae	930mg
Chipotle fully loaded Burrito with Carnitas	2410mg
McDonald's Premium Southwest Salad w/grilled chicken and 1 pkg Newman's Own Low Fat salad dressings	1690mg
Red Lobster Grilled Lobster, Shrimp & Scallops	3220mg
Panera's bowl Low-Fat Vegetarian Black Bean soup	1590mg
Taco Bell Grilled Stuft Burrito, chicken	1980mg

Packaged Foods	Sodium
Swanson's Hungry Man Roasted Carved Turkey <i>1 package</i>	1,620mg
Swanson's Hungry Man Beef Meatloaf w/ Brown Gravy, Mashed Potatoes <i>1 package</i>	1,510mg
Swanson's Hungry Man Classic Fried Chicken <i>1 package</i>	1,610mg
Oscar Mayer Lunchables Deluxe & Ham & Swiss & Cheddar <i>1 package</i>	930mg
Great Value Premium Macaroni and Cheese <i>1 box</i>	2,160mg
Progresso Classics Hearty Tomato Soup <i>1 cup</i>	1,110mg
Maruchan Instant Lunch Ramen Noodles w/ Vegetables <i>1 package</i>	1,120mg
Pillsbury Grands Homestyle Original Biscuits <i>1 biscuit</i>	600mg
Stouffer's Lean Cuisine Macaroni and Cheese Frozen Dinner <i>1 package</i>	630mg
Campbell's Cheddar Cheese Soup <i>1/3 of a can</i> – Multiply x3 if you eat the whole can!	890mg
Stouffer's Homestyle Classics Chicken Breast in BBQ Sauce and Cheese Cheese Potato Bake <i>1 package</i>	1,290mg
Armour Jumbo Hot Dogs <i>1 frank</i> - FOR ONE HOT DOG! Let's be real... how many do you eat?	680mg.

Julie Lanford, MPH, RD, CSO, LDN is a registered dietitian and board certified specialist in oncology nutrition. She currently serves as Wellness Director at Cancer Services in Winston-Salem, NC and authors a cancer nutrition website at www.cancerdietitian.com.

