

Tips To Reduce Salt and Sodium

Studies have found that the DASH eating plan can lower blood pressure in as fast as 2 weeks. Eating less sodium creates even bigger heart healthy benefits.



zucchini



Swiss cheese



bread

Eat your veggies.

Choose plain fresh, frozen, or canned (low-sodium or no-salt-added) vegetables and season them yourself.

Fresh is best.

Choose fresh or frozen skinless poultry, fish, and lean cuts of meat rather than those that are marinated, canned, smoked, brined, or cured.

Go "low or no."

Check the Nutrition Facts labels to compare sodium levels in foods. Choose low- or reduced-sodium, or no-salt-added versions of foods.

Pay attention to preparation.

Limit cured foods (such as bacon and ham); foods packed in brine (such as pickles, pickled vegetables, olives, and sauerkraut); and condiments (such as mustard, horseradish, ketchup, and barbecue sauce). Limit even lower sodium versions of soy sauce and teriyaki sauce, which should be used as sparingly as table salt.

Subtract, don't add.

Canned foods such as tuna and beans can be rinsed to remove some of the sodium. Cook rice, pasta, and hot cereals without salt. Cut back on instant or flavored rice, pasta, and cereal mixes, which usually have added salt.

Limit salty processed foods.

Skip or limit frozen dinners and mixed dishes such as pizza, packaged mixes, canned soups or broths, and salad dressings, which often have a lot of sodium. Prepare and eat more foods at home, where you can control how much sodium is added.

Spice it up.

Boost flavor with herbs, spices, lemon, lime, vinegar, or salt-free seasoning blends instead of salt or salty seasonings like soy sauce, spice blends, or soup mixes. Start by cutting salt in half and work your way toward healthy substitutes.

EASY TIPS FOR DINING OUT

Move the salt shaker away.

This simple first step could become second nature.

Research the restaurant's menu before going out.

Check online nutrition information and then avoid these on the menu: pickled, cured, smoked, soy sauce.

Make special requests.

Ask that your meal be prepared without added salt, MSG, or salty ingredients such as bacon, pickles, olives, and cheese.

Easy does it on the condiments.

A little goes a long way for mustard, ketchup, horseradish, pickles, and sauces with salt-containing ingredients.

Go for healthy appetizers and side dishes.

Choose fruit or vegetables instead of salty snacks, chips, or fries.