

Why should you be concerned about high blood pressure?

High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart attack, heart failure, stroke and kidney disease. High blood pressure is also known as “hypertension”.

- **1 in 5** Canadian adults have high blood pressure. Many are unaware they have it.
- **9 in 10** Canadian adults are likely to develop high blood pressure in their lifetime.

Healthy Eating for Healthy Blood Pressure

Eating healthy foods with less sodium will help lower your blood pressure and help prevent high blood pressure.



Healthy Eating with DASH

The **DASH Diet** (Dietary Approach to **S**top **H**ypertension) is similar to Canada’s Food Guide and

has been shown to improve blood pressure. The DASH Diet emphasizes eating plenty of vegetables and fruit, low-fat milk products, whole grains, lean meats, fish, legumes (dried beans) and nuts and limits sodium to 1500 - 2300mg each day.

What You Can Do



Vegetables and Fruit: **7-10 servings each day**

- ✓ Buy fresh or frozen vegetables instead of canned or packaged with added sauces.
- ✓ Choose low-sodium vegetable juices and soups.
- ✓ Enjoy fruit as a snack or dessert.
- ✓ Season vegetables with lemon or lime juice instead of salt.
- ✓ Eat more vegetables than fruit if you are trying to lose weight.



Grain Products: **6 - 8 servings each day according to your level of physical activity**

- ✓ Choose at least 3 higher fibre (more than 2 grams of fibre per serving), whole grain foods each day.
- ✓ Choose low-fat (less than 3 grams of fat per serving) grain products most often.
- ✓ Use and compare the Nutrition Facts label when buying breads, crackers, cereals, bakery products, desserts and snacks. Buy products with higher fibre, lower fat and lower sodium.

Milk and Alternatives: **2 - 3 servings each day**



- ✓ Choose skim or 1% milk and yogurt more often than cheese.
- ✓ Choose lower fat cheeses (less than 18% Milk Fat) and 1% or skim milk cottage cheese.
- ✓ Limit processed cheese slices and processed cheese spreads.
- ✓ Limit higher sodium and higher fat instant puddings and mixes for hot chocolate and coffees.



Meat and Alternatives: **2 - 3 servings each day**

- ✓ Have smaller portions of meats, fish and poultry. 75g (2.5 ounces) is a serving size.
- ✓ Buy fresh or frozen, unseasoned lean meat, poultry, fish, seafood and tofu most often.
- ✓ Eat a small handful of unsalted nuts and seeds several times a week.

- ✔ Limit processed, cured, smoked or deli meats such as wieners, sausages, ham, pepperoni, salami, luncheon meats and bacon, salami or deli roast beef, chicken and turkey.
- ✔ Enjoy meals made with peas and beans, lentils, edamame, chick peas at least once each week such as lower sodium chili, baked beans, hummus, split pea soup, etc.

Fats, Oils, Sweets and Snack Foods

- ✔ Use a smaller amount of vegetable oil rather than salted butter or margarine for cooking.
- ✔ Try making homemade salad dressing with no added salt.
- ✔ Check food labels and choose sweets and snack foods with the lowest amount of sodium and saturated or trans fat.

Lower Sodium Eating

Sodium is found in salt. All types of salt are high in sodium including table salt, Kosher salt, sea salt, fleur de sel, gourmet salt, seasoning salts and smoked salt. Sodium is also found in food additives such as MSG (monosodium glutamate).

- To decrease blood pressure, adults should consume less than 2000 milligrams (mg) each day.
- Most Canadians eat almost double the recommended amount of sodium each day.

Where does the sodium in your diet come from?

1. Over 75% of the sodium in your diet comes from processed foods and restaurant or take-out meals.
 - Breads, breakfast cereals, crackers, sweets and bakery products can contain high levels of sodium even though they may not taste salty

Restaurant and takeout meals can be very high in sodium

Examples of sodium content of restaurant foods

Menu Item	Sodium (mg)
Breakfast egg sandwich	840 mg
Chicken Caesar salad	570 mg
12" pepperoni pizza	5960 mg
Deluxe cheeseburger & medium fries	1910 mg
Fried chicken dinner	2280 mg

2. Another source of sodium is the salt and seasonings added during cooking and when you eat.
3. Small amounts of sodium also occur naturally in healthy, unprocessed foods.

What You Can Do

The best thing you can do is to eat natural, unprocessed and homemade foods more often. That way, YOU control the sodium.

At the grocery store

- ✔ Buy fresh or frozen unprocessed foods most often.
- ✔ Choose breads, crackers, baked goods, snack foods, sauces, soups, dressings and “healthy choice” items with the lowest sodium per serving.
- ✔ Read food labels to choose packaged foods with the lowest sodium.

The Nutrition Facts label can help you choose foods lower in sodium

Nutrition Facts	
Per 3/4 cup (175g)	
Amount Per Serving	% Daily Value
Calories 160	
Fat 2.5 g	4%
Saturated 1.5 g	8%
+ Trans 0 g	
Cholesterol 10 mg	
Sodium 75 mg	3%
Carbohydrate 25 g	8%
Fiber 0 g	0%
Sugars 24 g	
Protein 8 g	
Vitamin A 2 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium 20 %	Iron 0 %

- Check the serving size and note the amount of sodium.
- Choose foods with less than 120 mg sodium per serving.
- Choose foods with sodium that have a % Daily Value (DV) of 5% or less.

When eating at home

- ✔ Prepare and eat more unprocessed and home made foods. Find quick and easy recipes at www.dietitians.ca/yourhealth.
- ✔ Avoid adding salt when cooking and baking.
- ✔ Use lemon juice, lime, herbs and spices to add flavour without sodium.
- ✔ Use less ketchup, mustard, soy sauce, pickles, olives, prepared gravies, sauces and salad dressings.
- ✔ Avoid cured and deli meats.
- ✔ Remove the salt shaker from where you eat.
- ✔ Use diluted tomato paste instead of tomato sauce, powdered bouillon or canned soup in recipes.
- ✔ Do not use sea salt, fleur de sel or flavoured salts (onion, garlic, celery, BBQ etc.) in recipes; they are also high in sodium.

When eating restaurant or take-out meals

- ✓ Choose dishes made from fresh, low-sodium ingredients.
- ✓ Ask for less salt and other seasonings, like MSG (monosodium glutamate), to be added to your food.
- ✓ Ask for gravy, sauces and salad dressings “on the side”, and use lightly.
- ✓ Check the nutrition information of menu items to help you order and choose foods with less sodium. This information may be on a menu, poster or pamphlet at the restaurant or on their website.

Putting it all together. More DASH. Less sodium

Let your taste buds enjoy the flavour of nutritious food with less sodium. As you choose lower sodium foods more often, you will develop a preference for foods with less salt. You will soon find that some processed or restaurant foods taste too salty.

Menu Makeover

A few small changes can help you eat healthier according to the DASH Diet, Canada’s Food Guide (CFG) and to lower the sodium in your diet. Check out these menu makeovers that follow and give them a try.

Breakfast Menu Makeover

<i>Instead of...</i>	<i>Sodium (mg)</i>	<i>Try...</i>	<i>Sodium (mg)</i>
Raisin bran muffin - Larger	800	Multigrain bread - 2 Slices	300
Butter - 2 pats	75	Peanut butter - 1 Tbsp	75
		Banana	1
Flavoured coffee - 16 oz.	300	Coffee with 2oz 1% milk	32
Total	1175		408

Lunch Menu Makeover

<i>Instead of...</i>	<i>Sodium (mg)</i>	<i>Try...</i>	<i>Sodium (mg)</i>
White pita bread - small	322	Multigrain bread - 2 slices	300
Pastrami deli meat - 3 oz.	1225	Leftover roast beef - 2oz.	37
Cheese - 1 slice	176	Lettuce and cucumber	0
Mustard - 1 Tbsp	56	Mustard - 1 Tbsp	56
Dill pickle	385	Carrot sticks	60
Oatmeal cookies - 32 g	150	Low fat fruit yogurt - 175 g	123
		Apple	0
Total	2314		576

Supper Menu Makeover

<i>Instead of...</i>	<i>Sodium (mg)</i>	<i>Try...</i>	<i>Sodium (mg)</i>
Fast food chicken burger	990	Grilled chicken breast -75 g	64
Medium french fries	540	Baked potato + 1 Tbsp yogurt	43
Ketchup - 1 Tbsp	110	Tomato slices- 6	11
		Steamed broccoli - 1 cup	25
Apple turnover	200	Canned peaches - 1 cup	5
Milkshake - 16 oz.	350	1% Milk 8 oz.	122
Total	2190		270
Daily Total	5679		1254

Your Action Plan for healthy, lower sodium eating

1. Give yourself a pat on the back for the healthy habits you already have.
2. Make a checkmark ✓ beside your healthy habits and the changes that you feel ready to make.
3. Work on making one change at a time. Be sure the change is realistic so that you can stay with your new eating habit over the long-term.
4. Celebrate the positive changes that you make to your eating.

I do/will:

- ___ Eat at least 7-8 servings of vegetables and fruit each day
- ___ Choose lower sodium, high-fibre cereals, breads, bakery products and snacks
- ___ Choose 2-3 servings of low-fat milk products or alternatives each day
- ___ Prepare more homemade meals and bake from scratch
- ___ Use less salt at the table
- ___ Use less salt and salty seasonings in cooking and baking
- ___ Cut back on the amount of condiments, sauces and dressings added to food
- ___ Buy fewer processed foods
- ___ Choose low-fat, high-fibre, lower sodium snack foods
- ___ Have leftover cooked meat or chicken instead of deli meat in sandwiches
- ___ Eat fewer “instant” foods or foods made from mixes
- ___ Check food labels and buy lower sodium foods
- ___ Eat more beans, peas and lentils
- ___ Eat a handful of unsalted nuts or seeds several times each week.
- ___ Eat fewer take-out meals
- ___ Make healthy, lower sodium choices at restaurants
- ___ Watch my portion size, eat slowly and enjoy every bite
- ___ Take other actions such as: _____

For More Information

www.hypertension.ca
www.dietitians.ca
www.healthcheck.org
www.dashdiet.org
www.sodium101.ca
www.hc-sc.gc.ca

