

## Salt and sodium - What's the difference?

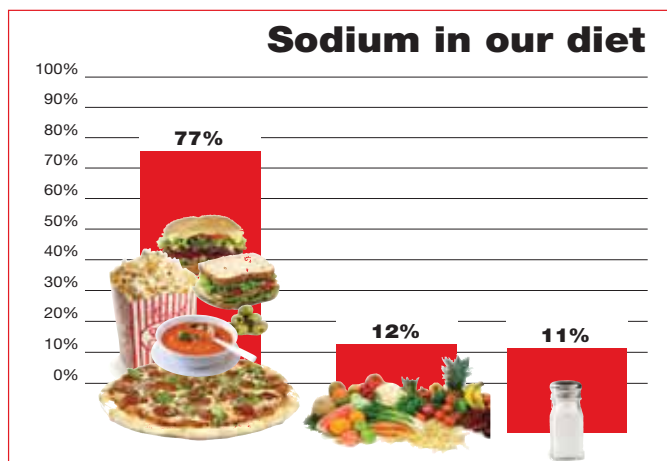
- **Salt** is an ingredient we add to our food. We use it in the form of table salt, sea salt and in some seasonings.
- **Sodium** is one of the mineral nutrients. Sodium is found mainly in salt but it is also part of some food additives, such as MSG.
- We can find out the total amount of sodium in our foods by checking the Nutrition Facts label. (See page 2)

## Too much sodium in your diet can lead to high blood pressure

- One of five Canadians have high blood pressure.
- High blood pressure may raise your risk of heart attack, heart failure, stroke and kidney disease.
- If you have high blood pressure, you may be able to lower it by cutting back on sodium.
- A healthy, low-sodium diet will also help your blood pressure medications work better.

## How much sodium do you need each day?

- To decrease blood pressure, adults should consume less than 2000 milligrams (mg) each day.  
**Note:** 1/2 tsp of salt has about 1,150 mg of sodium.
- Most Canadians eat almost double the recommended amount of sodium each day. Too much sodium can lead to high blood pressure.



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

A healthy, low-sodium diet includes:

- lots of vegetables and fruits
- low-fat milk products or alternatives
- whole grains
- lean meats, fish, legumes (beans) and nuts

## Where does the sodium in your diet come from?

1. Most 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.
2. Small amounts of sodium also occur naturally in healthy, unprocessed foods.
3. Another source of sodium is the salt and seasonings added during cooking and when you eat.
  - All types of salt are high in sodium, including Kosher salt, sea salt, fleur de sel, gourmet salt and smoked salt. They are not healthier choices.

## Take Action to Reduce Your Sodium Intake

**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

- ✓ 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 has a % Daily Value (DV) of 5% or less.

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	6%
Fiber 0 g	0%
Sugars 24 g	
Protein 8 g	
Vitamin A 2 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium 20 %	Iron 0 %

### When eating at home

- ✓ Prepare and eat more unprocessed and home made foods. Find quick and easy recipes at [www.dietitians.ca/yourhealth](http://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.

### For More Information

[www.hypertension.ca](http://www.hypertension.ca)  
[www.healthcheck.org](http://www.healthcheck.org)  
[www.dashdiet.org](http://www.dashdiet.org)  
[www.sodium101.ca](http://www.sodium101.ca)  
[www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)