

# SODIUM

## What it is...

Sodium is a mineral naturally found in foods. It is also a major part of ingredients that are used as preservatives or additives to processed foods, as well as being the major part of table salt.

## It's job is to...

One of the main jobs of sodium in your body is to regulate blood pressure and blood volume. It is also important in nerve and muscle functions. Sodium also helps to regulate your thirst.

## It can cause...

When your kidneys do not work properly, too much sodium in your diet can lead to problems with blood pressure management, edema (swelling), heart failure, shortness of breath, and cramping while on dialysis.



## MAINTAINING BALANCE

**The limits of sodium in your diet are usually 2 g per day or 2000 mg per day.**

If you still make urine, you may be able to eat more sodium in your diet. Your healthcare team will work with you to determine what your specific needs will be.

### Tips to limit your sodium intake:

1. Do not add salt to your foods.
2. Do not use any seasonings that end in the word "salt," such as "garlic salt." Instead, use herbs and spices that do not contain salt. Ask your dietitian before using salt substitutes; as they may be high in potassium.
3. Limit the use of condiments. Food such as ketchup, mustard, barbecue sauce, soy sauce, gravies and salad dressings may have large amounts of sodium in them.



**Be cautious** when eating out. Request food to be prepared without salt or MSG. Request sauces or dressings on the side. Avoid cured or salted meats such as ham, sausage, bacon, hot dogs and luncheon meats. Avoid soups; they are usually very high in sodium. Look at the nutrient analysis if it is available for the foods offered, it will usually list the amount of sodium in each food item.

## LEARN HOW TO READ FOOD LABELS

- Sodium is listed on the food label as mg (milligrams) per serving.
- Be sure to check the serving size and compare it to the amount that you eat.
- Some of the sodium containing ingredients used in food processing will be listed on the food label under ingredients. Some examples of those would be: salt, sodium, monosodium glutamate (MSG), baking powder, baking soda, disodium phosphate, sodium benzoate, sodium hydroxide, sodium nitrite, sodium propionate, and sodium sulfite.
- Do not be fooled by label claims such as “No Salt” -- they may still have some of those sodium containing ingredients. Also, the claim “Natural” does not mean low sodium because “salt” is natural. Be careful about “No added salt” foods, they may be high in potassium.
- Read the food labels on fresh meat and poultry. Normally they should have about 60 mg of sodium in a 3 oz serving.
- Many grocery stores now carry meats that look like they are fresh or fresh frozen, but have salt added to them. They may be injected with salt solution that helps keep the meat tender and moist during cooking. This can make a 3 oz serving of meat have 500 mg of sodium.

**Limit** use of canned, processed and convenience type foods (frozen dinners, dry noodle and rice mixes). Instead try to use fresh or frozen products, they usually have less sodium. Read the label!

Find **lower sodium** snack foods, such as unsalted popcorn, unsalted pretzels, unsalted crackers or chips.



**SPEAK WITH YOUR DIETITIAN ABOUT YOUR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS.**