

## Low Sodium Diet

Sodium occurs naturally in most foods. The most common form of sodium is sodium chloride, which is table salt. A low sodium diet includes no more than 1,500 to 2,400 milligrams (mg) of sodium per day. One teaspoon of salt equals approximately 2,300 mg of sodium. Low-sodium foods should have less than 140 mg of sodium per serving. Any food that has more than 300 mg of sodium per serving is considered a high-sodium food. Eating more than the serving size of a moderate or low-sodium food will make it a high-sodium food.

Below are general recommendations for following a low salt diet:

- Do not add salt to your food or during cooking. Instead, use herbs and spices to flavor foods.
- Eat fewer processed foods such as potato chips, frozen dinners, and cured meats.
- Check every "Nutritional Information" label before you buy or use a product. Note sodium and portion size information.
- Choose foods labeled "low sodium" or "reduced sodium".
- Eat more unprocessed, fresh foods, such as fresh fruits, vegetables, lean meats, poultry, fish, and unprocessed grains.

FOOD GROUP	LOWER SODIUM	HIGHER SODIUM
Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Milk (limit to 16 oz/day)</li> <li>- Buttermilk (limit to 1 cup per week)</li> <li>- Eggnog</li> <li>- All fruit juices</li> <li>- Low-sodium and salt free vegetable juices</li> <li>- Low-sodium carbonated beverages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Malted milk, chocolate milk</li> <li>- Milkshakes</li> <li>- Regular vegetable or tomato juices</li> <li>- Commercially softened water used for drinking or cooking</li> </ul>
Breads and Cereals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enriched white, wheat, rye and pumpernickel bread, hard rolls, and dinner rolls</li> <li>- Cornbread and waffles</li> <li>- Most dry cereals</li> <li>- Cooked cereals without added salt</li> <li>- Unsalted crackers and breadsticks</li> <li>- Low-sodium or homemade breadcrumbs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Breads, rolls, and crackers with salted tops</li> <li>- Quick breads, muffins, instant hot cereals</li> <li>- Pancakes</li> <li>- Commercial bread stuffing</li> <li>- Self-rising flour and biscuit mixes</li> <li>- Commercial breadcrumbs or cracker crumbs</li> </ul>
Desserts and Sweets	All desserts and sweets made with milk should be within allowance	Instant pudding mixes and cake mixes
Fats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Butter or margarine</li> <li>- Vegetable oils</li> <li>- Unsalted salad dressing, regular salad dressings limited to 1 tbsp</li> <li>- Light, sour, and heavy cream</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regular salad dressings containing bacon fat, bacon bits, and salt pork</li> <li>- Caesar dressing</li> <li>- Snack dips made with instant soup mixes or processed cheese</li> </ul>
Fruits	Most fresh, frozen, and canned fruits	Fruits processed with salt or sodium containing compounds (ex. some dried fruits)

Meat and Meat Substitutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Any fresh or frozen beef, lamb, port, poultry, fish, and shrimp</li> <li>- Canned tuna or salmon, rinsed</li> <li>- Egg and egg substitutes</li> <li>- Low-sodium cheese including low-sodium ricotta and cream cheese</li> <li>- Low-sodium cottage cheese</li> <li>- Regular yogurt</li> <li>- Low-sodium peanut butter</li> <li>- Dried peas and beans</li> <li>- Frozen dinners (&lt;500 mg sodium/serving)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Any smoked, cured, salted, koshered, or canned meat, fish, or poultry including bacon, chipped beef, cold cuts, ham, hot dogs, sausage, sardines, anchovies, cram, lobster, imitation seafood, marinated herring, and pickled meats</li> <li>- Pickled eggs</li> <li>- Regular hard and processed cheese, cheese spreads, and sauces</li> <li>- Salted nuts</li> <li>- Regular frozen dinners</li> </ul>
Potato and Potato Substitutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- White or sweet potatoes, squash</li> <li>- Enriched rice</li> <li>- Barley</li> <li>- Noodles</li> <li>- Spaghetti</li> <li>- Macaroni and other pastas cooked without salt</li> <li>- Homemade bread stuffing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Commercially prepared potato, rice, or pasta mixes</li> <li>- Commercial bread stuffing</li> </ul>
Soups, Sauces, and Gravies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low-sodium commercially canned and dehydrated soups, broths, sauces, gravy, and bouillons</li> <li>- Homemade broth, soups, sauces, and gravies without added salt and made with allowed vegetables</li> <li>- Cream soups within milk allowance</li> </ul>	Regular canned or dehydrated soups, broths, sauces, gravy, and bouillons.
Vegetables	Fresh, frozen vegetables and low sodium canned vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regular canned vegetables, sauerkraut, pickled vegetables, and other prepared in brine</li> <li>- Frozen vegetables in sauces</li> <li>- Vegetables seasoned with ham, bacon, or salt pork</li> </ul>

### Tips for Dining Out

Americans are eating more meals away from home than ever before. Controlling sodium intake does not have to spoil the pleasure of a restaurant meal, but you will have to be selective in ordering. Use these tips for meals away from home:

- When in doubt, keep your foods simple. Often special sauces or toppings add extra sodium to foods. Ordering a broiled cut of meat or piece of fish or chicken is a better choice than entrees covered with special sauces. Plain meat-type sandwiches with fresh vegetables toppings are usually lower in sodium than chicken, egg, or tuna salad sandwiches.
- Do not use the saltshaker. Use pepper instead if needed.
- Be familiar with low-sodium foods and make your restaurant selections from those items.
- When you order, be specific about what you want and how you want your food prepared. Request that they prepare your dish without salt.
- Go easy on the condiments and sauces. Ketchup, salad dressings, salsa, and sauces can increase the sodium in a food. Ask that sauces and salad dressings be served on the side.

- Avoid menu item words that may indicate a high sodium content such as: marinated, pickled, smoked, au jus, teriyaki, soy sauce, and cooked or in broth.

**Ways to Season Food:**

- Salt substitute with physician's approval, pepper, herbs, spices, vinegar, mustard (1 Tbsp), lemon or lime juice, hot pepper sauce, salsa (2 Tbsp), garlic powder, onion powder, celery powder.
- Avoid seasoning with any seasoning made with salt, including garlic salt, celery salt, onion salt, or sea salt.