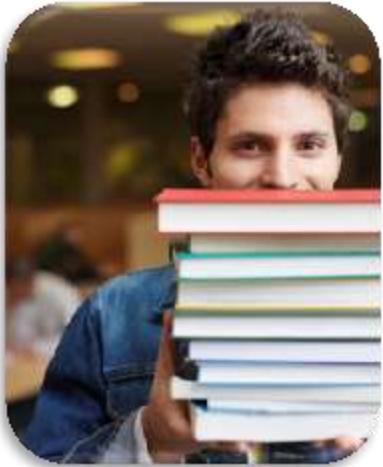


## Sodium Reduction in Communities

Eating too much sodium (salt) can cause high blood pressure. High blood pressure (hypertension) increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. Your body only needs a small amount of sodium to work properly, too much sodium is bad for your health. **Heart disease and stroke are the first and fifth leading causes of death in the United States.** (<https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/>)

The Sodium Reduction in Communities Program is working with **early childhood centers and higher education institutions** to reduce the amount of sodium in the foods that are served. Modifying the way young people eat today will improve their health later.



### Reducing Sodium in Children's and Young Adults Diets

Nearly 9 in 10 US children eat more sodium than recommended, and about 1 in 9 children has raised blood pressure, which is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. (<http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/>). Lowering sodium in children's diets today may help prevent heart disease tomorrow. Small changes now can make a big impact on our future health.

Most of the sodium that we eat is in the form of salt and is in many **processed and restaurant foods**. It is important for you to pay attention to food labels when shopping and dining out.

### Look for low sodium foods when you are food shopping:

- Buy fresh, frozen (no sauce), or no salt added canned vegetables.
- Use fresh poultry and lean meat, rather than canned or processed meats.
- Buy low sodium, lower sodium, reduced sodium, or no salt added versions.
- Limit your use of sauces, mixes, and “instant” products, including flavored rice and ready-made pasta (because they often high in salt).
- Compare Nutrition Facts labels on food packages for Percent Daily Value or amount of sodium in milligrams and choose foods with a lower sodium content.

### Look for low sodium foods when you are dining out:



**SALT MAY BE HIDING IN YOUR FOOD**

- Check online for nutritional information before you eat at a restaurant.
- Ask your server for information about the amount of sodium in your selection. Sometimes this information is printed on the menu.
- Request that no salt be added to your food.
- Beware of hidden sources of sodium such as sauces and dressings, and ask for these toppings on the side.