

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 are often high in salt).
- Compare Nutrition Facts labels on food packages for Percent Daily Value (%DV) or amount of sodium in milligrams and choose foods with lower sodium content.

Look for low sodium foods when you are dining out:

- 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.



**SALT MAY BE HIDING
IN YOUR FOOD**