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The Royal Liverpool
and Broadgreen
University Hospitals
NHS Trust

Patient information

Reduced Salt Diet

Therapies Directorate – Dietetics Department

Name:
Date:
Dietitian:

What is Salt?

Salt is made up of sodium and chloride. Salt is the major source of sodium in our diet. It is the sodium part of salt which is harmful to health.

Most people in the UK consume more salt than is required. The reason why our salt intake is too high is because many people are not aware that a lot of foods contain salt. In fact, 75% of our intake comes from salt which has been added to everyday foods such as cereals, soup, ready meals, snacks, and processed meats.

Only a quarter of our salt intake comes from salt added at the table or in cooking. It is therefore easy to eat too much salt without adding any yourself!

Why do I need to lower my salt intake?

Too much salt in your diet increases the amount of fluid retained in your body, which can cause high blood pressure. This increases the risk of developing coronary heart disease (CHD), a major cause of strokes and heart attacks.

Benefits of reducing your salt intake:

- Helps to lower blood pressure.
- Helps to prevent fluid retention.
- Helps to reduce the feeling of thirst, which is helpful if you are on a fluid restriction.

How much salt can I eat?

In the UK today, we eat an average of 9-12g of salt a day. Current guidelines recommend that we should have a maximum of 6g of salt per day.

Practical tips to help you to cut down the salt in your diet

- Do not add salt (e.g. table salt, rock salt and sea salt) to your food at the table. You may use a pinch in cooking. Flavour foods with herbs, spices, garlic and lemon instead (see later section for more ideas).
- Use fewer processed/convenience foods e.g. dehydrated meals, ready meals and packet mixes.
- Limit processed and smoked meat or fish. Choose fresh / frozen or roast cuts where possible.
- Limit salty snacks such as crisps, salted nuts and salted crackers.
- Bottled sauces (e.g. soy sauce, tomato sauce, brown sauce) and high salt flavour enhancers (e.g. stock cubes, gravy granules) can be used sparingly.
- Limit foods tinned in brine (salt water). Look for foods tinned in spring water or oil instead.
- Choose fresh or frozen vegetables, or those tinned in water.
- Try not to have more than 4oz (100 grams) of cheese per week.
- Avoid salt substitutes such as Lo Salt, Selora, Biosalt, Pansalt and Ruthmol. These are high in potassium and therefore, may not be suitable.

Eating out salt tips

When eating out or getting a takeaway you can still eat less salt by making sensible choices.

- **Pizza** - choose vegetable or chicken instead of pepperoni, bacon or extra cheese.
- **Pasta** - choose ones with tomato sauce, vegetables, chicken or fish instead of cheese based sauces and processed meats.
- **Burgers** - avoid extra toppings such as bacon, cheese and barbeque sauces.
- **Chinese or Indian** - choose plain rice instead of egg fried or pilau rice.
- **Sandwiches** - instead of ham, corned beef, prawn, cheese and bacon go for fillings such as chicken, beef, egg, salmon, tuna, vegetables and salad.
- **Breakfasts** - instead of a full English breakfast go for a poached, scrambled or fried egg on toast with mushrooms and grilled tomatoes.
- **Salads** - ask for dressings or sauces on the side so you only use as much as you need.

Food Labelling

Look at the Nutritional Information

Regularly checking the nutrition information on food labels can help you to choose lower salt options.

Salt often appears as sodium on food labels (6g of salt is equivalent to 2.5g of sodium).

Check the label to see how much salt/sodium is in the food per 100g of product.

Nutrition		
Typical values (as consumed)	per 100g	per serving size
Energy	541kj/128kcal	2011kj/476kcal
Protein	4.9g	18.2g
Carbohydrates	20.8g	77.4g
of which sugars	1.5g	5.6g
Fat	2.8g	10.4g
of which saturates	2.3g	8.6g
Fibre	2.1g	7.8g
Sodium	0.1g	0.5g
Salt equivalent	0.3g	1.3g

Look at the amount of salt or sodium

Then compare it against this table which outlines what is 'a little,' 'a moderate' amount or 'a lot' of salt/sodium per 100g of product.

	Little (eat freely)	Moderate (eat occasionally)	A Lot (try to avoid)
Sodium (per 100g)	0.1	0.3	0.6
Salt (per 100g)	0.25	0.75	1.5

If the label says that the product contains a 'trace' amount of sodium or salt, it means it has minimal amounts and is therefore suitable to have.

The salt content of food can vary between different brand names so it is important to always check the label. For example, one brand of cornflakes has 0.6g sodium (1.5g salt) per 100g of product whereas another brand has 0.3g sodium (0.75g salt) per 100g product.

Reduced Salt / Low Salt Products

Many supermarkets now stock 'reduced salt' ranges of foods and drinks.

It is important to check the ingredients as they may contain the salt substitute potassium chloride which may not be suitable for you. Check with your dietitian.

Foods Allowed check labels where possible	Foods to Limit
Cereals and Bread Bread. Breakfast cereals e.g. branflakes, cornflakes, Special K, Weetabix, rice krispies. Dried or fresh pasta. Plain rice. Noodles.	Cereals and Bread All Bran, Salted porridge. Tinned spaghetti, ravioli. Savoury rice. instant / pot noodles.
Dairy Products Milk, cream. Low fat fruit yoghurt /natural yoghurt / fromage frais. Eggs, butter and margarine (try the slightly salted or unsalted varieties). Cream cheese, cottage cheese. Vanilla ice cream.	Dairy Products Limit cheese to 4 oz (100 grams) a week. e.g. hard, processed, continental, cheese spread
Meat and Fish Lamb, beef, pork, chicken, turkey, duck, liver, tripe (fresh or frozen) Fresh or frozen white fish e.g. cod, haddock. Fresh or frozen oily fish e.g. mackerel, salmon, tuna. Fish in breadcrumbs / batter, fish fingers. Tinned fish in spring water or oil (drained)	Meat and Fish Processed and tinned meat e.g. corned beef, ham and tongue. Pâtés. Limit 'reduced salt' bacon to once a week. Sausages, burgers, pies, pasties and black pudding. Convenience /readymade meals (check labelling). Smoked fish e.g. kippers, yellow haddock. Shellfish e.g. prawns, shrimps and scampi. Fish paste. Fish cakes. Tinned fish in brine e.g. sardines, tuna.
Nuts, pulses and meat substitutes Unsalted nuts. Reduced salt baked beans (check labelling).	Nuts, pulses and meat substitute Baked beans, peanut butter, salted nuts.
Sugars, preserves and confectionery Sugar, honey, marmalade, jam, syrup. Sweets and chocolate.	Sugars, preserves and confectionery None to limit.
Cakes, biscuits and snacks Plain/jam sponge, Madeira, cherry cake, cream horn, doughnut, apple slice, Danish pastry, lemon meringue pie, meringue, plain scones, biscuits, shortbread, non-salted popcorn, breadsticks, oat cakes, rice cakes, melba toast, water biscuits	Cakes, biscuits and snacks Twiglets, salted crisps, corn and maize snacks e.g. Walkers, Golden Wonder, Skips, Monster munch, Wotsits, Wheat Crunchies Salted biscuits or crackers e.g. Ritz, Tuc

Foods Allowed check labels where possible	Foods to Limit
Drinks Tea, fruit and herbal teas, coffee, hot chocolate, fruit juice, cordials. Fizzy drinks / waters. Moderate amounts of alcohol.	Drinks Tinned or bottled vegetable juice e.g. tomato juice.
Miscellaneous Pepper, vinegar, mustard powder, herbs and spices (see alternative flavourings section). Traditional Bisto powder may be used in small amounts.	Miscellaneous Salt, garlic salt, sea salt, rock salt. Meat or yeast extracts e.g. Bovril, Oxo, Marmite, Vegon, stock cubes (you can use one cube in cooking instead of salt). Bottled sauces and pickles e.g. tomato ketchup, gravy mixes and granules use sparingly Salt substitutes e.g. Lo Salt, Selora. Tinned and packet soups.
Fruit and Vegetables Fresh or frozen fruit and vegetables	Fruit and Vegetables Tinned vegetables, olives and other vegetables in brine

Alternative Flavourings

Fresh or dried herbs and spices can be used to add a wide variety of flavours to food. The following guide gives ideas for their use:

- **Basil** – Best with tomato, mushroom, cheese and egg dishes. Sprinkle chopped fresh or dry basil as a garnish or use towards the end of cooking.
- **Bay Leaves / Bouquet Garni** – use in stews, sauces, gravies, casseroles.
- **Chives** – Very good chopped up in cottage cheese, omelettes and scrambled eggs.
- **Dill** – use with fish and new potatoes.
- **Fennel** – Use in fish recipes or over cucumber salads or soup. Good in hummus and pulse dishes.
- **Garlic** – Add to any savoury dishes. (Do not use garlic salt).
- **Mint** – make mint sauce or add to water when cooking vegetables or potatoes.
- **Oregano / Marjoram** – Use with roast lamb, chicken, fish, stews and omelettes.

- **Parsley** – Use in soups and stews, with meat, fish, vegetables, sauces, casseroles and stuffing.
- **Rosemary** – Use in roasting lamb, chicken, potatoes, grilled chops, stews, stuffing and white cabbage.
- **Sage** – Use in stews and pork dishes.
- **Tarragon** – Use small amounts with chicken, fish and tomatoes or add to salad dressings.
- **Thyme** – Add to lamb, pork, cottage cheese, omelettes, salads and stuffing.
- **Allspice** – Add ground allspice to ham dishes, curries, meat loaves and sweet potatoes. Add whole allspice to boiled meats, pot roasts, soups and bean dishes.
- **Cayenne Pepper** – Use in curries, vegetables, and cheese dishes.
- **Coriander** – Use in curries, stews and pickles.
- **Cumin** – Use in curries, lamb, aubergines and yoghurt.
- **Nutmeg** – Add to mashed potatoes, vegetables, egg dishes and chicken.
- **Paprika** – Add to meat, fish and vegetables.
- **Pepper** – Can be used on many dishes.
- **Turmeric** – Use powdered in curries or when boiling rice to give it an appealing yellow colour.
- **Mustard Powder** - Mix with water and spread on steak or chops when grilling.
- **Lemon Juice and Vinegar** – Small amounts bring out the flavour of green vegetables. Make good salad dressings.
- **Apple sauce, mint jelly or cranberry sauce** - can be used to accompany various meats.

Please Note:

People with kidney problems should avoid Star Fruit. This has been known to cause neurological problems when eaten by people with a reduced kidney function.

If you have diabetes some of the foods mentioned in this diet sheet may not be suitable due to the high sugar content. Please discuss with your Dietitian.

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Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future

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Further Information

Renal Dietitians

Tel: 0151 706 3005

Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 3005

renaldietitians@rlbuht.nhs.uk

Please include your dietitians name in subject box of email

Useful Websites

www.bhf.org.uk

www.nhs.uk/livewell/goodfood/pages/cut-down-salt.aspx

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