

Factsheet

CUT BACK

ON SALT



Your body needs salt to function normally. But, too much salt can increase your blood pressure and your risk of heart disease, stroke and stomach cancer.

High blood pressure increases the strain on the heart, enlarges the heart muscle and can lead to heart failure. Most people with high blood pressure don't even realise it, as there are usually no symptoms. This is why it is important to have regular check-ups with your GP.

Salt (sodium) is found naturally in almost every food. You can easily get your daily requirement from the natural salts found in fresh foods without having to add it to your meals.

Over 75 per cent of the salt we eat comes from processed foods. Salt is often used in packaged foods to enhance flavour or as a preservative. High levels of salt are added to foods such as hot chips, potato chips, packet soups and sauces, pies, sausage rolls, sausages, chorizo, pizzas and ready made meals. Some foods we recommend as part of a healthy diet such as breakfast cereals, nuts, baked beans and canned vegetables may also have high salt levels. We recommend choosing low salt, reduced salt or no added salt varieties of these foods.

By eating salty foods and adding salt to your meals, you acquire a taste for it. If you gradually decrease the amount of salt you eat, your taste buds will adjust. After a few weeks of cutting back on salt, you won't miss it and you'll be able to enjoy the taste of the food itself. This is especially important for children whose tastes are being trained for life.

Instead of adding salt when cooking, add flavour with fresh or dried herbs and spices. Pepper, basil, lemongrass, ginger and garlic are healthy additions to food and provide delicious flavour.

The recommended average daily intake of salt is less than 6 grams (2300 milligrams sodium). But, the average Australian has about 9 grams of salt (3450 milligrams of sodium) every day.¹

Reducing the amount of salt you have can be as easy as switching brands. So when shopping, read food labels and try to choose products with less than 120mg of sodium per 100g.

▲ Compare packaged foods per 100g/mL

		GOOD	OKAY
Total fat	Food	Less than 3g	3 – 10g
	Drinks	Less than 1.5g	1.5 – 5g
Saturated Fat	Food	Less than 1.5g	1.5 – 3g
	Drinks	Less than 0.75g	0.75 – 1.5g
Sugar	Food	Less than 5g	5 – 15 g
	Drinks	Less than 2.5g	2.5 – 7.5g
Sodium (Salt)	Food	Less than 120mg	120 – 400mg
	Drinks	Less than 120mg	120 – 400mg

Also choose foods **high in fibre** (3g or more per serve) for added benefits



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1. Australian Division of World Action on Salt and Health, 2010 (retrieved June 2012)

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