

Sodium

Why is everyone so concerned about sodium these days? It's an essential nutrient, but if you're like most Americans you're probably getting way more sodium than your body needs or that's good for your heart. In some people, sodium increases blood pressure because it holds excess fluid in the body, creating an added burden to your heart. Blood pressure rises with age, and eating less sodium now will help curb that rise and reduce your risk of developing other conditions associated with too much sodium, such as stroke, heart failure, osteoporosis, stomach cancer, and kidney disease. Most people consume about 3,400 milligrams of sodium a day — more than twice the 1,500 milligrams recommended by the American Heart Association.

Effects of Sodium on Your Body

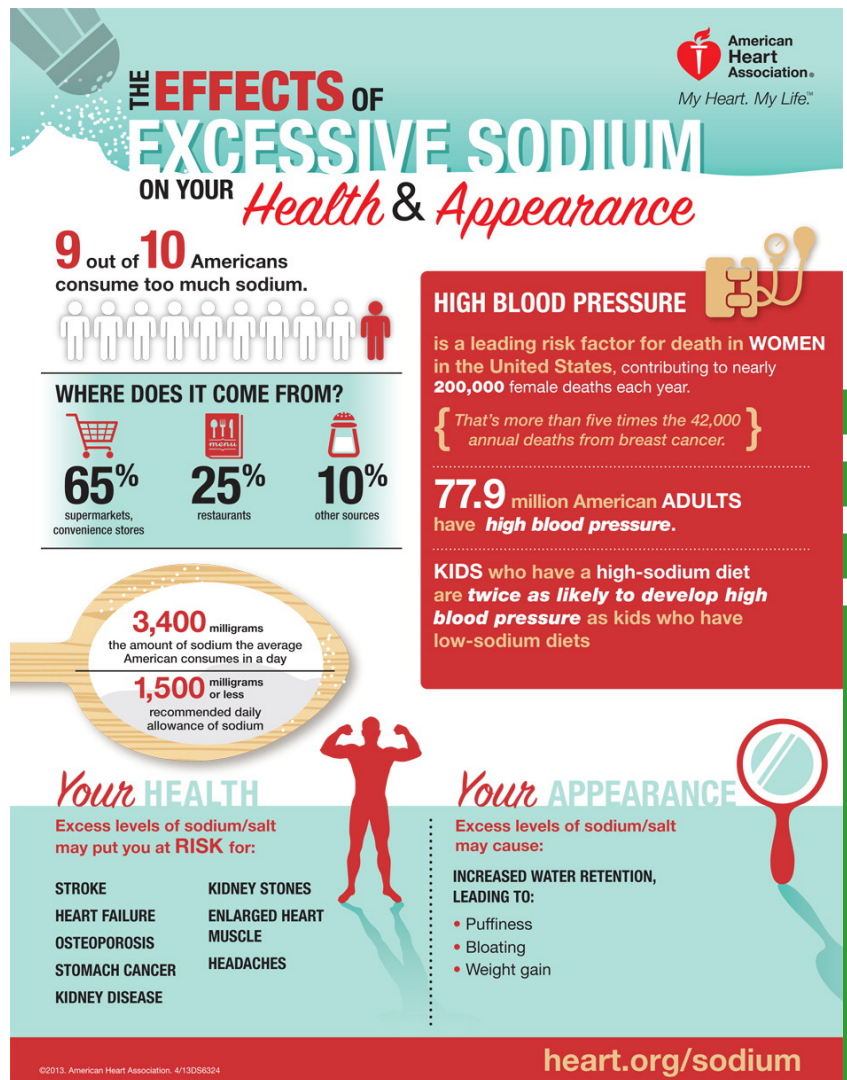
In addition to causing high blood pressure, sodium can also affect your health in other ways. Excess levels of sodium/salt may put you at risk for:

- High Blood Pressure
- Stroke
- Heart Failure
- Osteoporosis
- Stomach Cancer
- Kidney Disease
- Kidney Stones
- Enlarged Heart Muscle
- Headaches

Excess sodium can also affect your appearance by causing water retention which leads to puffiness, bloating and weight gain.

Salty Foods

The biggest contributor to our sodium consumption is not the salt shaker. Approximately 75 percent of the sodium we eat comes from sodium added to processed foods and restaurant foods. This makes it hard for people to choose foods with less sodium and to limit how much sodium they are eating because it is already added to their food before they buy it. There are six common foods listed by the American Heart Association that usually contain large amounts of sodium. Breads and rolls, cold cuts and cured meats, pizza, poultry, soup, and sandwiches are common foods that contain high salt contents.



Sodium, continued

Tips to Track Your Sodium

- ◆ Don't forget to check the nutrition labels on prepared and packaged foods, because up to 75 percent of the sodium we consume is hidden in processed foods. Watch for the words "soda" and "sodium" and the symbol "Na" on labels, which mean sodium compounds are present.
- ◆ If you're going to eat pizza, try a cheese-less pizza with cooked, chicken strips and lots of veggies.
- ◆ Use fresh, skinless poultry that isn't enhanced with sodium solution instead of fried or processed chicken.
- ◆ When choosing soup, try lower-sodium varieties.
- ◆ Make your sandwiches with lower-sodium meats and low-fat, low sodium cheeses, and try not to pile on the condiments.
- ◆ Choose foods with potassium to counter the effects of sodium. It may help lower your blood pressure.

Low-Sodium Canned Diced Tomatoes		Canned Diced Tomatoes	
Nutrition Facts		Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1/2 cup (130g)		Serving Size 1/2 cup (130g)	
Servings Per Container 3 1/2		Servings Per Container 3 1/2	
Amount Per Serving		Amount Per Serving	
Calories 25	Calories from Fat 0	Calories 25	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*		% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%	Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%	Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g		Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%	Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 10mg	1%	Sodium 150mg	6%
Potassium 270mg	8%	Potassium 230mg	6%
Total Carbohydrate 5g	2%	Total Carbohydrate 5g	2%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%	Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Sugar 3g		Sugar 3g	
Protein 1g		Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 5%	Vitamin C 30%	Vitamin A 5%	Vitamin C 20%
Calcium 4%	Iron 4%	Calcium 4%	Iron 6%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.		*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.	