

Reducing Sodium in Children's Diets

The pressure is on to keep
blood pressure down

About 9 in 10 US children eat more sodium than recommended. Most sodium is in the form of salt, as a part of processed foods. A high sodium diet can lead to high blood pressure. About 1 in 6 children ages 8-17 years has raised blood pressure. High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Lowering sodium in children's diets today can help prevent heart disease tomorrow, especially for those who are overweight.

The taste for salt is established through diet at a young age. Parents and caregivers can help lower sodium by influencing the way foods are produced, sold, prepared, and served.

As a parent and caregiver, you can:

- Model healthy eating for your children by having a diet rich in fruits and vegetables without added sodium.
- Compare Nutrition Facts labels to choose the lowest sodium option before you buy.
- Ask your grocery manager to provide more low sodium options of your family's favorite foods.
- Request restaurant nutrition information to make lower sodium choices.

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Want to learn more? Visit

<http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/children-sodium/>



90%

About 90% of US children ages 6-18 years eat too much sodium daily.

10



10 common types of foods contributed more than 40% of the sodium eaten by children.



1 in 6

1 in 6 children has raised blood pressure, which can be lowered in part by a healthy diet, including less sodium.

Problem

Commonly eaten foods have too much sodium.

How much is too much?

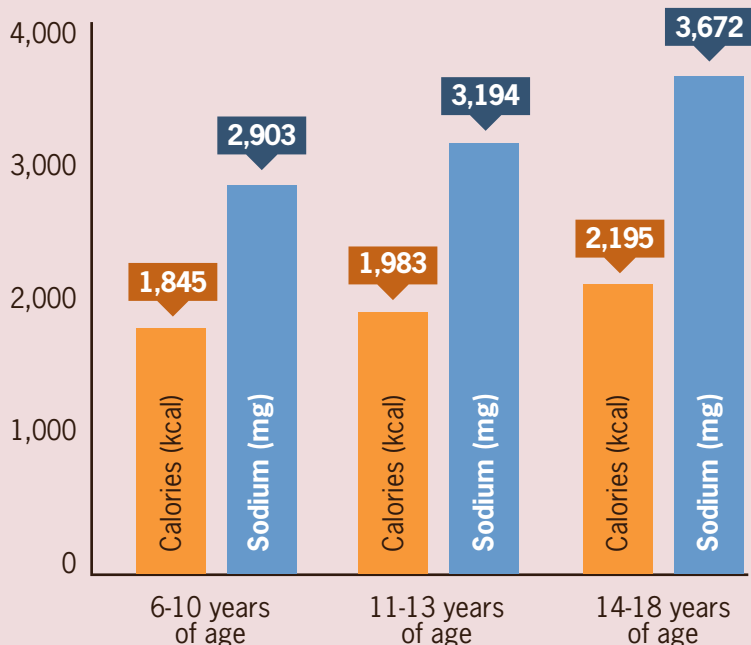
- ◇ US children ages 6-18 years eat an average of about 3,300 mg of sodium a day before salt is added at the table. The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that children eat less than 2,300 mg per day.
- ◇ Eating too much sodium affects some people's blood pressure more than others. Children in these groups should eat even less sodium, 1,500 mg per day:
 - African Americans, and those with
 - Hypertension
 - Diabetes
 - Chronic kidney disease
- ◇ Teens consume more calories and more sodium-rich foods than younger children.

Where does it come from?

- ◇ **Every meal and snack.** Children eat about 15% of sodium at breakfast, 30% at lunch, 39% at dinner, and 16% at snacks.
- ◇ **Common foods.** About 43% of sodium eaten by children comes from just 10 common food types: pizza; bread and rolls; cold cuts and cured meats; sandwiches like cheeseburgers; snacks, such as chips; cheese; chicken patties, nuggets, and tenders; pasta mixed dishes, such as spaghetti with sauce; Mexican mixed dishes, such as burritos and tacos; and soup.
- ◇ **Processed foods and restaurant foods.** Most sodium is already in food before you buy it or order it. About 65% comes from store foods, 13% from fast food and pizza restaurant foods, and 9% from school cafeteria foods.

How much sodium do children eat?

Most children are eating too much sodium daily, and teens are consuming foods higher in sodium than younger children.



10 sources of sodium in children's diets






About 43% of sodium eaten by children comes from just 10 common food types:

- Pizza
- Bread/rolls
- Cold cuts/cured meats
- Savory snacks
- Sandwiches
- Cheese
- Chicken patties/nuggets, etc.
- Pasta mixed dishes
- Mexican mixed dishes
- Soups



Great SALternatives

Small changes make a big impact on your child's daily sodium intake.

A Typical Day	Sodium (mg)*		Make the Change	You could save Sodium (mg)*
Breakfast at home: Whole-wheat toast (1 slice), Egg (scrambled and salted), Orange juice (4oz)	280		Compare bread products when shopping to find lower sodium options. Try seasoning with pepper, parsley or thyme on eggs in place of salt.	85
Morning snack: Whole-grain graham crackers (8 squares), Skim milk (4oz)	250		Cut the amount of graham crackers in half. Load up on fruit, naturally low-sodium. Pack a banana as a snack!	150
Lunch at school: School Lunch pepperoni pizza (1 slice), Sliced cucumbers (4oz), Gelatin cup	850		Try the new pepperoni pizza that meets the sodium targets for National School Lunch Program.	160
Snack: Crackers (about 16), Baby carrots (about 8), Hummus (2 Tbsp)	450		Look for reduced sodium crackers at the grocery store. Compare brands of products, such as hummus, and pick the lowest in sodium.	250
Dinner on the go: Fast food deli sandwich with meat, cheese and veggies, Side of potato chips, Sports drink (12oz)	1585		Ask to see the nutrition facts before ordering. Skip the deli cheese and use less condiments. Swap chips for lower-sodium chips. Choose water.	490
Total Sodium:	3,285		Total Saved:	1,135

*Values were rounded to the nearest 5mg

SOURCES: Packaged and restaurant food data collected from manufacturers' and retailers' websites, June 2014
Nutritional values for whole food products are available by the United States Department of Agriculture's National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference
Nutritional values: <http://ndb.nal.usda.gov/>

Low Sodium Quick Tips Here are 3 reminders...



At the Store

- ◇ Read nutrition labels to compare products and choose the lowest sodium option.
- ◇ Use more naturally low sodium foods, like fruits and vegetables without added salt, for cooking at home.
- ◇ Out of options? Ask your local grocer to stock low sodium choices of the foods you buy.



At School

- ◇ Support healthy sodium standards for snacks and meals in the cafeteria and school events.



At Restaurants and Fast Food Eateries

- ◇ Before you order ask for nutrition facts, then select a lower sodium choice.
- ◇ When you order, ask that no salt be added to your food when cooking.

SOURCE: CDC Vital Signs, Sept. 2014 www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns

What Can Be Done



Federal government is

- ◇ Applying new nutrition standards for foods sold and served in schools that will reduce sodium up to 50% by 2022.
- ◇ Reducing sodium intake as part of the Million Hearts® initiative. Low sodium meal ideas, recipes, and nutrition information are available at <http://recipes.millionhearts.hhs.gov/>.
- ◇ Working with communities and states to improve access to lower sodium foods.



Parents and caregivers can

- ◇ When cooking at home, try different spices, herbs, and vegetables instead of salt.
- ◇ Use 'low sodium' or 'no salt added' ingredients in your meals and recipes.
- ◇ Model healthy eating for your children by having a diet rich in fruits and vegetables without added sodium.
- ◇ Compare Nutrition Facts labels to choose the lowest sodium options before you buy.
- ◇ Ask your grocery manager to provide more low sodium options of your family's favorite foods.
- ◇ Request restaurant nutrition information to make healthier, lower sodium choices.
- ◇ Use social media outlets to share your challenges and successes for reducing sodium in your child's diet.

Places that produce, sell, or serve food can



- ◇ Make gradual reductions in sodium added to foods sold and served. Some companies have already made efforts to reduce added sodium.
- ◇ Replace sodium with alternatives like spices, herbs, and vegetables.
- ◇ Shop around for lower sodium brands to carry or ask producers for lower sodium options.
- ◇ Make low sodium foods more visible through displays and promotions.

Schools and school districts can



- ◇ Meet or exceed the USDA's Nutrition Standards for National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/nutrition-standards-school-meals>
- ◇ Implement food purchasing policies and standards that reduce sodium in foods.
- ◇ Replace high-sodium foods with lower sodium options, including fruits and vegetables.
- ◇ Provide training for school nutrition services staff to help reduce sodium in school foods.
- ◇ Engage students with taste tests to help increase preferences for new items.

For more information, please contact

Telephone: 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)

TTY: 1-888-232-6348

Web: www.cdc.gov/info

Web: www.cdc.gov

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