



**The Shakedown on Sodium**  
**Get the facts**

Sodium is a nutrient found in table salt and many other foods. Some sodium occurs naturally, but most of it is added to our food for flavour and preservation.

Our bodies need only a small amount of sodium to be healthy. Sodium helps regulate fluids and blood pressure, and keeps muscles and nerves running smoothly. Most Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, including children, consume too much sodium.

## Use the % Daily Value to solve the mystery

5% DV or less is a little. 15% DV or more is a lot.

Amount	% Daily Value
<b>Calories</b> 90	
<b>Fat</b> 3 g	<b>5 %</b>
Saturated Fat 0.5 g + Trans Fat 0 g	<b>8 %</b>
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0 mg	
<b>Sodium</b> 132 mg	<b>6 %</b>
<b>Carbohydrate</b> 14 g	<b>5 %</b>
Fibre 2 g	<b>8 %</b>
Sugars 2 g	

## fact Sodium is found in salt

All types of salt are high in sodium. Kosher salt, sea salt, fleur de sel, gourmet salt and smoked salt all have about the same amount of sodium as table salt. They are not healthier choices.

## fact We eat too much sodium

We all need some sodium, but most of us eat about 3,400 mg of sodium per day. This is more than double the amount of sodium we need. Healthy adults need only 1,500 mg of sodium per day, and healthy children need only 1,000 to 1,500 mg of sodium per day.

## fact Eating too much sodium can be harmful to our health

Eating too much sodium can cause high blood pressure, stroke, heart disease and kidney disease. Eating less sodium can help you and your family stay healthy and feel your best.

## fact Most of the foods we eat contain too much sodium

Over 75 per cent of sodium we eat comes from processed foods such as cheese, deli meats, pizza, sauces and soups. Packaged and ready-to-eat foods, fast foods, and restaurant meals are often high in sodium. Breads, breakfast cereals and bakery products also contain sodium even though they may not taste salty.

# Reducing sodium at the store

- Choose more fresh, unprocessed foods in place of prepackaged and convenience foods.
- Select plenty of vegetables and fruit, both of which help reduce the risk of high blood pressure. Frozen vegetables and fruit are just as nutritious as fresh.
- Compare food labels using the % Daily Value (% DV) on the Nutrition Facts Table. Buy products with lower amounts of sodium. For overall health, look for less fat and sugar and more fibre as well.
- Buy unsalted and low-sodium foods when possible.
- Look for “sodium-free” or “low sodium” on the package.
- Some reduced sodium foods may still contain a lot of sodium, such as soy sauce, so be sure to read the Nutrition Facts Table and use in moderation.
- Look for products with a sodium content of less than 15% DV. Check the food labels often because product ingredients may change. Five% DV or less is a little. Fifteen% DV or more is a lot.

## Make wise choices from the four food groups in Canada’s Food Guide

### Vegetables and fruit

- Buy fresh or frozen vegetables whenever possible.
- Look for canned vegetables that are low in sodium
- Buy low sodium vegetable juice and tomato juice.

### Grain products

- Choose bread, breakfast cereals and bakery products that are lowest in sodium.
- Enjoy a variety of grains such as barley, quinoa and rice which are naturally sodium free.

### Milk and alternatives

- Choose milk, fortified soy beverages and yogurt because they are low in sodium.

### Meat and alternatives

- Buy unseasoned meat, poultry, fish, seafood and tofu.
- Choose unsalted nuts.
- Buy low sodium canned beans or try dried beans, peas and lentils.

**Did you know?** Most processed foods found in the grocery store are high in sodium, including:

- deli and luncheon meats
- canned, packaged or pre-made soups, broths, sauces and condiments
- ready-to-eat meals such as pizza and frozen dinners
- processed cheese and cheese spreads
- ready-to-eat foods (like those found at the take-out counter)
- snack foods (such as chips and salted nuts)
- pickled vegetables

# Reducing sodium at home

Prepare your own meals often, using little or no salt.  
Reduce the sodium when you prepare meals by:

- Rinsing canned vegetables and canned beans, peas and lentils to wash away some of the sodium.
- Using roasted meat, eggs or peanut butter instead of deli meat for sandwiches.
- Using less salt than the recipe calls for.
- Using less ketchup, soy sauce and other condiments, or trying the lower sodium option.
- Using less of the seasoning that comes with taco kits, packaged macaroni and cheese, pasta, soup and rice mixes.

Flavour foods with herbs and spices.

Here are a few ideas:

- **basil** - tastes great with tomatoes and pasta
- **cumin** - adds flavour to soups, stews and sauces
- **curry** - good with meat, poultry and stews
- **dill** - wonderful with fish, potatoes and eggs
- **oregano** - perfect in pasta, soups and salads
- **paprika** - good with seafood, vegetables, potato salad and eggs
- **rosemary** - delicious with chicken, lamb and pork
- **thyme** - tasty with chicken, veal, salads and vegetables

**Did you know?** Salt should never be added to food for children under the age of one year.

# Reducing sodium at restaurants

Choose wisely when eating out.

Make lower sodium menu choices by:

- Ordering smaller portions or share with someone.
- Asking for gravy, sauces and salad dressings “on the side”, and use only small amounts.
- Flavouring your food with lemon or pepper instead of adding salt, sauces or gravy.
- Balancing out your day. If you ate a high sodium restaurant meal today, make sure you eat a lower sodium meal at home.
- Checking with your server about monosodium glutamate (MSG), a seasoning sometimes used in restaurants that is very high in sodium.

Find the best menu choices

Check the nutrition information for menu items before you order and choose foods with less sodium. This information may be in a poster or pamphlet at the restaurant or on the restaurant’s website. Some restaurants are participating in the *Informed Dining* program and must display the *Informed Dining* logo and a statement on the menu or menu board advising customers that nutrition information is available at the point of ordering.

For recipes and tips from registered dietitians, visit:  
[www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)

For a copy of *Canada's Food Guide*, visit:  
[www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide)  
or call 1-866-225-0709

To learn more about sodium and your food, visit:  
[www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/sodium](http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/sodium)



Newfoundland  
Labrador