

# Dietetics

## Reducing your Salt Intake

### Patients and Relatives Information





## Why have I been advised to reduce my salt intake?

Eating a reduced salt diet can help to reduce your risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke. Salt regulates the amount of fluid in your body, so you may be advised to cut down on salt to help reduce fluid retention.

## How much salt do I need?

Current guidelines recommend that an adult should have no more than 6g of salt a day, which is the equivalent of one teaspoon (children should have much less than this).

However, you may be advised to follow a stricter 'no added salt' diet if you are having problems with fluid retention in your body.

## How can I tell if a food is high in salt?

Most of the salt we eat is already added to our foods. Checking the nutrition information on food labels will tell you about the salt content of different foods. Use the table below as a guide when checking food labels and try to choose foods with a low salt content.

**Top Tip** - Sometimes food labels will list sodium instead of salt; to work out the salt content multiply the sodium content by 2.5. For example, if a food contains 1g sodium, it contains around 2.5g of salt.

<b>LOW salt content</b>	<b>MEDIUM salt content</b>	<b>HIGH salt content</b>
<b>0.3g or less per 100g</b>	<b>0.3 - 1.5g per 100g</b>	<b>1.5g or more per 100g</b>

## **Alternative Salts and substitutes**

Salt substitutes are not suitable for everyone as they contain high levels of potassium. If you have been told by your doctor to reduce your potassium intake, these are not suitable.

Alternative salts such as Rock salt and Sea salt are not recommended as alternatives as they have the same effect on our bodies as normal table salt.

## **How can I reduce my salt intake?**

- Most of the salt in our diets comes from manufactured or processed foods - check food labels and choose foods that are lower in salt
  - Prepare your meals at home using fresh ingredients and avoid adding salt when cooking
  - Use a variety of fresh or dried herbs and spices when cooking; such as garlic, rosemary, oregano, basil, thyme, chilli, ginger etc.
  - Avoid adding salt or high salt condiments to your food at the table – see list below
  - Try adding black pepper, vinegar, balsamic vinegar, or lemon juice to your meals to add extra flavour
  - Foods may taste bland initially, however after 2-3 weeks your taste buds will adapt to having less salt, and you may find that high salt foods taste unpleasant
  - The table below shows what foods have a low, medium and high level of salt
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Food Group	Lower salt option	Medium salt content - Check the Label	High salt content
<b>Starchy Carbohydrate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Porridge oats</li> <li>▪ Breakfast cereals or muesli with no added salt</li> <li>▪ Rice</li> <li>▪ Pasta</li> <li>▪ Potatoes</li> <li>▪ Plantain</li> <li>▪ Quinoa, buckwheat etc.</li> <li>▪ Couscous</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Breakfast cereals</li> <li>▪ Sandwiches</li> <li>▪ Bread, rolls, bagels</li> <li>▪ Flavoured rice</li> <li>▪ Tinned spaghetti or ravioli</li> <li>▪ Pasta or potato salads</li> <li>▪ Processed potatoes e.g. waffles, croquettes, chips</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pizza</li> <li>▪ Flavoured instant noodles</li> <li>▪ Quiche</li> <li>▪ Most pastries</li> </ul>

Food Group	Lower salt option	Medium salt content - Check the label	High salt content
<b>Meat, fish, eggs, dairy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fresh meat and poultry</li> <li>▪ Fish and oily fish</li> <li>▪ Tinned fish - in water</li> <li>▪ Eggs</li> <li>▪ Milk, yoghurt and cream</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Breaded meat, poultry or fish</li> <li>▪ Meat based soups or casseroles</li> <li>▪ Fish cakes</li> <li>▪ Tinned fish - in oil</li> <li>▪ Meat, poultry or fish in sauce</li> <li>▪ Cream cheese</li> <li>▪ Sandwich fillers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Processed meat e.g. ham, bacon, bacon, corned beef, gammon, burgers, sausages, pate, salami</li> <li>▪ Pies</li> <li>▪ Sausage rolls</li> <li>▪ Smoked fish</li> <li>▪ Tinned fish in brine</li> </ul>
<b>Vegetarian alternatives/ other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Soya mince</li> <li>▪ Most vegetarian mince</li> <li>▪ Tofu</li> <li>▪ Beans and pulses - tinned in water</li> <li>▪ Fresh/ dried beans and pulses</li> <li>▪ Vegetables</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Vegetarian burgers, sausages, etc.</li> <li>▪ Vegetarian ready meals</li> <li>▪ Baked beans or beans tinned in sauce</li> <li>▪ Ready meals and tinned soups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Vegetarian pastries</li> <li>▪ Hard cheeses</li> </ul>

<b>Fats and Oils</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Most oils e.g. olive, rapeseed, canola, peanut, groundnut, sunflower, sesame, corn oil</li> <li>▪ Unsalted butter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Low fat spreads</li> <li>▪ Dripping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Butter (salted)</li> </ul>
<b>Desserts and sweet snacks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fruit</li> <li>▪ Jelly</li> <li>▪ Ice cream</li> <li>▪ Milky puddings e.g. rice pudding</li> <li>▪ Sweet pastries</li> <li>▪ Chocolate spread</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Desserts with salted caramel</li> <li>▪ Fruit buns</li> <li>▪ Sponge puddings</li> <li>▪ Biscuits</li> <li>▪ Cereal bars</li> <li>▪ Croissants</li> <li>▪ Fruit pies or tarts</li> <li>▪ Fudge and toffee</li> <li>▪ Hot chocolate and malt drinks</li> <li>▪ Peanut butter</li> <li>▪ Salted nuts</li> <li>▪ Crisps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cheese and biscuits</li> </ul>
<b>Food Group</b>	<b>Lower salt option</b>	<b>Medium salt content - Check the Label</b>	<b>High salt content</b>
<b>Sauces and Seasonings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pepper</li> <li>▪ Vinegar</li> <li>▪ Lemon Juice</li> <li>▪ Herbs</li> <li>▪ Spices</li> <li>▪ Garlic</li> <li>▪ Tomato puree</li> <li>▪ Apple, cranberry and mint sauces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pasta sauce</li> <li>▪ Curry sauce</li> <li>▪ Gravy</li> <li>▪ Packet sauces</li> <li>▪ Chutneys</li> <li>▪ Pickles</li> <li>▪ Reduced salt gravy and stock cubes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All types of salt - including rock and sea salt</li> <li>▪ Soy sauce</li> <li>▪ Stock cubes</li> <li>▪ Yeast extract</li> <li>▪ Tomato ketchup</li> <li>▪ Mayonnaise</li> <li>▪ BBQ sauce</li> <li>▪ Salad cream</li> <li>▪ Mustard</li> <li>▪ Horseradish</li> <li>▪ Pesto</li> <li>▪ Tabasco sauce</li> </ul>

**For more information please visit:**

[www.actiononsalt.org.uk](http://www.actiononsalt.org.uk)

<http://www.actiononsalt.org.uk/resources/how-to-eat-less-salt/recipes/>

[www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/salt-nutrition/>

Or try FoodSwitch UK - a free and easy-to-use app to help you find out what's in the food you're eating, so you can make simple switches to healthier options!

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