
Low Sodium Diet:

3 grams Sodium (3000 milligrams) (130 mmol)

By following these guidelines you will be able to select foods low in salt.

Guidelines

1. Eat a variety of foods each day for a balanced diet.
2. Do not add salt to your food during cooking or at the table. Instead, use herbs and spices to flavour your foods. (See "Flavouring Foods Without Salt.")
3. Do not drink water treated by a water softener. If you have a water softener, it should be connected so that your drinking water is not affected.
4. Avoid salty convenience foods and fast foods. These foods have a lot of salt added during their preparation.
 - Examples of high salt convenience foods are: ready-to-use or dried soups, sauces, seasoning mixes, canned spaghetti, TV dinners, pizza mixes, packaged macaroni dinners, and Hamburger Helper®.
 - Examples of fast foods are: foods from burger, fried chicken, and pizza restaurants and packaged foods such as breaded chicken or fish.
5. Buy fresh foods when you shop because they are usually lower in salt. For example, buy fresh meats, poultry and fish, fresh fruits, and fresh vegetables.
6. Read the labels on packaged foods to find foods lower in salt. Foods listing salt or sodium near the beginning of the ingredient list are high in salt.

Note: Some labels use the symbol "Na" instead of the word "sodium".
7. Before using a potassium containing salt substitute, ask the doctor if it is safe for you.
8. Do not use baking soda as an antacid. It is high in sodium. Before you buy a medication not ordered by your doctor, ask the pharmacist if it is allowed on a low salt diet. For example, laxatives and antacids may contain sodium.
9. Before you travel to a hot climate, ask your doctor if you should continue your salt restriction while you are away.

Adapted from the Low Sodium Diet: (3-5 gram sodium) with permission from the *BCDNA Manual of Nutritional Care, 1992.*

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Further Information:

Recommended Cookbooks

Important: For foods allowed or not allowed, follow these guidelines, not the cookbook. These cookbooks are recommended for recipes and flavouring ideas, not as replacements for your diet guidelines.

1. Lindsay, A. (1998). *Anne Lindsay's new light cooking*. Toronto, ON: Ballantine Books.
2. Lindsay, A. (1991). *Lighthearted everyday cooking*. Toronto, ON: Macmillan of Canada.
3. Starke, R. D., & Winston, M. (1995). *The American Heart Association low-salt cookbook: A complete guide to reducing sodium and fat*. Toronto, ON: Random House of Canada, Ltd.
4. Stern, B. (1994). *Simply HeartSmart cooking*. Toronto, ON: Random House.
5. Stern, B. (1996). *More HeartSmart cooking*. Toronto, ON: Random House.

Note: For Anne Lindsay's and Bonnie Stern's cookbooks, use recipes that contain no more than 500 mg sodium per serving (see the recipe analysis).

Eating Out on the Low Sodium Diet

Choose restaurants that will prepare food without salt. If you eat out regularly, make it a habit to select meals lower in salt. Ask the dietitian/nutritionist which of your favourite foods are the best choices.

Sample Menu for Eating Out

- Appetizer with sauce on the side (for example, chicken wings with BBQ sauce on the side)
- Salad with oil and vinegar (or dressing on the side)
- Broiled, baked, roasted, poached, or grilled meat, poultry or seafood (with sauce or gravy on the side)
- Plain vegetables, potato, rice, or rolls
- Dessert
- Milk, fruit juice, soft drinks, coffee or tea

Note: If gravy, sauce or dressing tastes salty, do not eat it or eat only a small amount.

Common Restaurant Meals

- Sandwiches: Choose fillings of vegetables, roasted meat or poultry, egg, cheese, or fish. Avoid fillings of ham, processed meats, processed cheese and pickles.
- Pasta: All sauces are high in salt. Avoid high salt ingredients such as ham, parmesan or romano cheese, or olives.
- Chinese Food: Most foods served in Chinese restaurants are high in sodium. Eat Chinese food only very occasionally. Choose steamed rice rather than fried rice or noodle dishes and avoid sauces.
- On hamburgers choose tomato, onion, lettuce, hard cheese. Do not order processed cheese. Use condiments (relish, catsup, mustard) sparingly.
- Fish and Chips: Ask for unsalted fries. Add lemon or vinegar, not salt or catsup. If the batter tastes salty, eat only a small amount.
- Curries: Ask for foods prepared without salt. Avoid salty chutneys or relishes.
- Pizzas: All pizzas are high in salt. The ones that are lowest in salt are the vegetarian pizzas made with real mozzarella cheese and fresh vegetables (no olives).

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Flavouring Foods Without Salt

1. Choose herbs, spices and seasonings that do not contain salt. Always check that salt or sodium is not on the ingredient list. For example, use:
 - Fresh garlic or garlic powder (not garlic salt)
 - Fresh, dried or powdered onions (not onion salt)

*Note that **sea salt** is just as high in sodium as regular salt.*
2. Try growing fresh herbs in your garden or home. Herbs add flavour and a fresh taste to foods.
3. Make your own blend of salt-free seasoning. Try this recipe:

Universal Seasoning

15 mL (1 Tbsp)	dried mustard
15 mL (1 Tbsp)	paprika
15 mL (1 Tbsp)	garlic powder
15 mL (1 Tbsp)	onion powder
7 mL (1 1/2 tsp)	black pepper
5 mL (1 tsp)	basil
5 mL (1 tsp)	thyme

Mix and store in a salt shaker.

4. Sprinkle fresh lemon or lime juice on cooked rice, potatoes, vegetables, fish or chicken.
5. Look for new flavouring ideas in cookbooks and magazines. For example:
 - Use fruit as a sauce for meat (pineapple, nectarine, orange or kiwi sections on chicken).
 - Add curry to meat, poultry or fish.
 - Make your own salad dressings from oil, assorted vinegars, garlic, herbs, and spices.
 - Flavour stir-fried foods with fresh ginger and garlic. Add unsalted peanut butter for a Thai flavour.
 - Experiment with homemade pizzas made with any combination of fresh vegetables, allowed cheeses, herbs, and low salt meats. (Some butchers and delicatessens carry low-salt sausages).
6. Sprinkle balsamic vinegar on vegetables, and use it to give extra zip to marinades and salad dressings.
7. Use wine as a flavouring in marinades, stewed meats and sauces.
8. Collect cookbooks and recipes that use low-salt flavourings. Exchange low-salt recipes with friends and family.

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Food Choices: 3 gram Sodium Diet

Type of Food	Best Choices: 3 gram Sodium Diet	Foods to Avoid
Milk and Milk Products	All milk products allowed except: <i>Limit to 1 cup (250 mL) per day any of the following:</i> Buttermilk, commercial milkshakes, malted milk, Instant Breakfast®	
Breads and Cereals	Any except those under "Foods to Avoid." Reduced-salt crackers such as Ritz®, Triscuits®, Breton®, Stoned Wheat Thins®	Breads, crackers or rolls with salted tops. Salted snack foods such as chips, pretzels, popcorn. Baking mixes such as pancake mixes or biscuit mixes. Pancakes from fast food outlets. Preseasoned rice or pasta products such as Rice-A-Roni®. Packaged stuffing mixes. Instant cooked cereal (the kind to which you add hot water and stir).
Meat, Fish, Poultry and Alternates	Any except those under "Foods to Avoid." Unsalted nuts, seeds, peanut butter. Limit: Salted peanut butter to 1-2 Tbsp/day Salted nuts and seeds to less than 1/4 cup/day	Salted, smoked, dried, or pickled foods such as: luncheon meats, ham, bacon, sausages, wieners, sardines, pickled herring, pickled eggs, smoked fish. Hamburgers, pizza, Mexican food, fried chicken, breakfast meals, from fast food outlets. Convenience foods such as canned stews, TV dinners, fish sticks, pot pies, baked beans, casserole mixes, canned chili con carne. Processed cheeses such as cheese slices, Cheez Whiz® or Velveeta®. Blue, feta, parmesan, romano or roquefort cheese. Fermented tofu curd.
Fruits and Vegetables	All fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables without added salt. Salted canned tomato products: Tomato paste may be used as a recipe ingredient. Limit canned tomato to 1/2 cup. Avoid tomato sauce or stewed tomato.	Vegetables canned with salt. Creamed corn. Frozen vegetables in a sauce. Instant potatoes or potato casseroles. Salted French fries. Regular spaghetti sauces (such as Prego®). Pickled vegetables such as sauerkraut or pickles. Oriental dried salted fruit. Seaweed.

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Type of Food	Best Choices: 3 gram Sodium Diet	Foods to Avoid
Soups	Homemade soups made without meat extracts or yeast extracts. Salt-free canned soup <i>Allowed 3 times a week:</i> 125 mL (1/2 cup) canned or dried soup.	Meat extracts and soup base cubes such as bouillon, Oxo® or Bovril®. Yeast extracts (Marmite® or Vegemite®).
Fats and Oils	Any except those under "Foods to Avoid." <i>Limit to 15 mL (1 Tbsp) once a day:</i> Commercial salad dressing.	Bacon fat, salt pork. Packaged gravies, sauces, and salad dressings. Packaged chip dips. Gravies or sauces made with salt or meat extracts or yeast extracts such as Oxo® or Marmite®.
Desserts and Sweets	Any except those under "Foods to Avoid."	Instant pudding mixes. Commercial snack pies or cakes (such as Twinkies®). Rennin desserts such as Junket®.
Beverages	Any except those under "Foods to Avoid."	Water treated with water softener. Gatorade®. Mineral waters with a sodium content of more than 11 mmol/litre (250 mg sodium/litre).
Other Foods	Unsalted herbs or spices, dry mustard. Lemon, lime or vinegar Tabasco®. Flavouring extracts such as vanilla. Cocoa. Certo®. Salt-free catsup, relishes or other salt-free condiments. <i>Allowed once a day:</i> 15 mL (1 Tbsp) of one of the following: barbecue sauce, HP Sauce®, Heinz 57®, catsup, horseradish, relish, Worcestershire Sauce®, or prepared mustard.	Sea salt. Seaweed. Salt substitutes containing salt (such as Vege-Sal® or Lite Salt®). MSG (Accent®). Salted herbs and spices like garlic salt, lemon pepper (read labels). Meat tenderizer. Soy sauce (any type). Oriental sauces, such as black bean, fish, hoisin, oyster, teriyaki. Olives, pickles, chutneys made with salt. Meat and poultry coatings such as Shake'N'Bake®. Yeast extracts (Marmite®, Vegemite®). Meat extracts such as bouillon, Oxo® or Bovril®. Rennin tablets or powder.

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