Healthy Eating in Indian Country: 7 Eating Less Salt and Sodium

Most people eat too much salt and sodium. Sodium is in salt. Sodium is also in many foods that may not taste salty. Most of the sodium in our diets comes from salt in processed foods we buy. We also add extra salt to food in cooking and at the table. Read food labels to choose foods lower in sodium and salt.

Why Eat Less Salt?

Eating less salt and sodium may be better for your blood pressure and heart. For some people, a diet high in salt and sodium may lead to **high blood pressure**. Untreated high blood pressure may increase the risk of **heart disease**, **kidney disease**, or **stroke**. Have your blood pressure checked by an Indian Health Service doctor or clinic to see if you need to limit salt in your diet.

Use Fewer Foods High in Sodium

- Seasonings like soy sauce, garlic salt, onion salt, meat tenderizer, or pickled foods
- Canned tomato juice and canned soups
- Processed American cheese or Swiss cheese
- Snack foods such as potato chips, corn chips, salted crackers, and salted nuts and seeds
- Cured or processed meat like hot dogs, bacon, ham, sausage, and luncheon meats

Use Less Salt When You Cook

- Drain the liquid from canned vegetables. It has extra salt in it. To remove more salt, rinse the vegetables under running water.
- Reduce the amount of salt you use in cooking. Leave salt out of recipes that use cheese, canned foods, and seasonings like Worcestershire or soy sauce. These foods already have a lot of salt in them.
- Cook pasta, rolled wheat, rolled oats, and rice with little or no salt.
- Use herbs and spices like pepper, thyme, basil, chili powder, garlic, and onion to season food instead of salt.

Use Less Salt at the Table

- Taste your food before you add salt.
- Use only half your usual amount of salt.
- Remove the salt shaker from the table.

LOW SALT AND SODIUM TIPS

Herbs and spices are wonderful alternatives to salt and other foods high in sodium.

Herb Blend #1

1-1/2 teaspoons thyme
1-1/2 teaspoons sage
2 teaspoons rosemary
2 teaspoons marjoram
2-1/2 teaspoons savory

Herb Salt Substitute

3 teaspoons basil
2 teaspoons savory
2 teaspoons celery seed
2 teaspoons ground cumin seed
2 teaspoons sage
1 teaspoon lemon thyme
2 teaspoons marjoram

Herb Blend #2

1 teaspoon celery seed
2-1/2 teaspoons marjoram
2-1/2 teaspoons savory
1-1/2 teaspoons thyme
1-1/2 teaspoons basil

- Reduce salt by one-half or eliminate salt in any recipe.
- Use 1/4 teaspoon of dried herbs for every four servings of food.