

# Low Sodium Eating Guide: 1500 to 2000 mg a day

# Low Sodium Eating Guide: 1500 to 2000 mg a day

Too much sodium (salt) in your diet can lead to high blood pressure, kidney disease, and liver and heart problems.

Following a low sodium diet will help to manage your condition and help you feel better. It can also help your medication work better.

Limit your sodium to 1500 to 2000 mg a day. Cut back on sodium wherever you can to help you reach your goal.

**Sodium is found in all types of salt.** Table salt has about the same amount of sodium as:

- › Kosher salt
- › Sea salt
- › Artisan salts
- › Gourmet salts
- › Fleur de sel

## **Follow these tips to lower your sodium:**

- **Do not add salt, sea salt, or seasoned salt at the table.**
- **Do not use salt when cooking or baking.** Most recipes can be made without salt.
- Use unsalted seasonings, spices, fresh garlic, and herbs instead.
- Limit condiments, like ketchup and mustard.
- Try low sodium spice blends like Mrs. Dash™, President's Choice Blue Menu No Salt Added Blends®, or McCormick® Salt Free blends.

- Buy fresh or frozen vegetables, not canned unless labelled “salt-free”.
- Avoid canned, processed, or other convenience foods (like store-bought meals). These are often high in sodium.
- Do not eat foods that are smoked, cured, pickled, or salted.
- Eat out less often. Many restaurant food items (like pizza and milkshakes) are high in sodium.
- Avoid fast food items like fried chicken, Mexican food, and Chinese food.
- Check with your primary health care provider or dietitian before using:
  - › NoSalt®
  - › Half Salt™
  - › Nu-Salt®
- Choose more of the “best choices” and less of the “foods to avoid” items listed on the next page. This will help you choose foods lower in sodium.
- Choose foods with **less than 5% daily value (DV) of sodium per serving.**
- Avoid foods with **10% or more DV of sodium per serving.**
- Look for foods that are labelled “salt free”, “no salt added”, or “low sodium”.
- Use this pamphlet to help with meal planning.

Quick guide to % Daily Value (DV) of nutrients:

- › 5% or less is low.
- › 15% (**10%** for sodium) or more is high.

The label below indicates a high sodium food to avoid. Choose foods with at most 10% DV of sodium. **Less is better.**

Sample label for macaroni and cheese:

1. Check serving size and calories
2. Limit fats and check for high sodium content
3. Get enough of these nutrients
4. Footnotes (more information)

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>			
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)			
Serving Per Container 2			
Amount Per Serving			
<b>Calories</b>	250	Calories from Fat 110	
% Daily Values*			
<b>Total Fat</b>	12g		<b>18%</b>
Saturated Fat 3g			<b>15%</b>
Trans Fat 3g			
<b>Cholesterol</b>	30mg		<b>10%</b>
<b>Sodium</b>	470mg		<b>20%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b>	31g		<b>10%</b>
Dietary Fiber 0g			<b>0%</b>
Sugars 5g			
<b>Protein</b>	5g		<b>10%</b>
Vitamin A	4%	•	Vitamin C 2%
Calcium	20%	•	Iron 4%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.			
	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2400mg	2400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

<b>Best choices</b>	<b>Foods to avoid</b>
<p><b>Grain products</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yeast breads, homemade waffles, pancakes, and biscuits</li> <li>• Plain unsalted crackers</li> <li>• Dry cereals made without salt (like Shredded Wheat, puffed wheat, Mini-Wheats®)</li> <li>• Cooked cereals made without salt</li> <li>• Pastas (like macaroni and spaghetti)</li> <li>• Rice</li> </ul> <p>Note: Look for products with 8% or less DV of sodium.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baking mixes (like pancake and biscuit mixes)</li> <li>• Bread stuffing mixes</li> <li>• Seasoned crumb coatings (like Shake 'n Bake®)</li> <li>• Salted crackers</li> <li>• Quick-cooking and instant hot cereals</li> <li>• Pre-seasoned pasta</li> <li>• Canned spaghetti and pasta</li> <li>• Pre-seasoned pasta mixes (such as Hamburger Helper™, Kraft Dinner®, Knorr® Sidekicks®)</li> <li>• Seasoned rice</li> <li>• Instant soups (such as Mr. Noodles®)</li> </ul>

<b>Best choices</b>	<b>Foods to avoid</b>
<p><b>Vegetables and fruit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresh vegetables</li> <li>• Frozen vegetables without seasoning or sauces</li> <li>• Salt-free/low sodium canned vegetables</li> <li>• Fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and fruit juices</li> <li>• Dried fruit</li> <li>• Low sodium vegetable juices</li> <li>• Tomato and pasta sauces, and canned tomatoes labelled “no salt added”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canned vegetables with added salt</li> <li>• Frozen vegetables with seasonings or sauces</li> <li>• Vegetable juices (like Clamato® and V8®)</li> <li>• Seasoned potato mixes (like scalloped, instant, or hash browns)</li> <li>• Pickles</li> <li>• Sauerkraut, kimchi, or other fermented vegetables</li> <li>• Seaweed</li> <li>• Canned or bottled pasta and pizza sauces</li> <li>• Dried potato mixes, such as scalloped or mashed</li> </ul>

<b>Best choices</b>	<b>Foods to avoid</b>
<p><b>Milk and milk products</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk, cream</li> <li>• Soy, rice, or almond drinks with no more than 5% DV of sodium</li> <li>• Evaporated skim milk</li> <li>• Cream cheese</li> <li>• Unsalted cottage cheese</li> <li>• Cheeses with no more than 10% DV of sodium. This includes many cheeses, except those listed under “foods to avoid”. Limit intake to 30 g (1 oz) a day.</li> <li>• Low sodium cheese</li> <li>• Ricotta cheese</li> <li>• Bocconcini</li> <li>• Ice cream, sherbet, or frozen yogurt</li> <li>• Yogurt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processed cheese spread (such as Cheez Whiz®)</li> <li>• Processed cheese slices</li> <li>• Blue, feta, Romano, and Parmesan cheeses</li> <li>• Cottage cheese</li> <li>• Malted milk</li> <li>• Buttermilk</li> <li>• Condensed milk</li> <li>• Hot chocolate mixes</li> <li>• Storebought eggnog</li> <li>• Ready-made and instant puddings</li> </ul>

<b>Best choices</b>	<b>Foods to avoid</b>
<p><b>Protein foods: meat and plant-based proteins</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plain, fresh, or frozen: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Beef, pork, lamb</li> <li>› Chicken, turkey</li> <li>› Fish</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Eggs (3 to 4 yolks a week)</li> <li>• Egg whites</li> <li>• Unsalted nut butters (or 1 serving of regular nut butter with no more than 5% DV of sodium)</li> <li>• Canned tuna and salmon in water, rinsed</li> <li>• Frozen entrees with no more than 10% DV of sodium</li> <li>• Dried or frozen unseasoned pulses (like dried beans, chickpeas, or lentils)</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Shellfish naturally has more sodium than other fish, so choose shellfish less often.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All meat, fish, and poultry that has been smoked, cured, pickled, salted, or dried, like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Bacon</li> <li>› Bologna</li> <li>› Corned beef</li> <li>› Ham</li> <li>› Kosher meats</li> <li>› Deli meats and cold cuts</li> <li>› Salt cod</li> <li>› Sardines</li> <li>› Sausages</li> <li>› Smoked or pickled fish</li> <li>› Hotdogs</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Frozen breaded fish or chicken</li> <li>• Canned beans</li> <li>• Canned meat, frozen dinners and meat pies</li> <li>• Canned stews</li> <li>• Salted seeds and nuts</li> <li>• Pizza</li> <li>• Chinese food</li> </ul>



<b>Best choices</b>	<b>Foods to avoid</b>
<p><b>Fats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soft (non-hydrogenated), salt-free margarine (such as Becel® Salt-Free)</li> <li>• Cooking oil (like olive or canola)</li> <li>• Salt-free salad dressings (see recipe on page 10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Limit regular salad dressings and regular mayo to 1 tbsp a day</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Low sodium mayonnaise</li> <li>• Homemade gravy with no added salt</li> <li>• Vegetable oil cooking sprays</li> <li>• Avocados</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bacon fat</li> <li>• Salt pork</li> <li>• Canned gravy</li> <li>• Gravy mixes</li> <li>• Most storebought salad dressings</li> <li>• Storebought dips</li> </ul>
<p><b>Soups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsalted soup or broth</li> <li>• Canned low sodium soups with no more than 10% DV of sodium</li> <li>• Homemade soup with no added salt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular canned soups</li> <li>• Dried soup mixes, bouillon (such as Oxo®), consomme</li> <li>• Split pea soup made with ham bone</li> <li>• Bean and bacon soup</li> </ul>

Best choices	Foods to avoid
<p><b>Other foods</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water, mineral water</li> <li>• Postum®, Ovaltine®</li> <li>• Coffee, tea</li> <li>• Sugar, honey, jams and jellies, cornstarch, maple syrup</li> <li>• Herbs and spices without salt</li> <li>• Salt-free seasoning blends (such as Mrs. Dash™, McCormick® Salt Free blends, or PC® Blue Menu™ No Salt Added Seasoning Blends).</li> <li>• Vinegar</li> <li>• Tabasco® Sauce</li> <li>• Unsalted, air-popped popcorn</li> <li>• Cream of tartar</li> <li>• Cocoa</li> <li>• Baking powder and soda in small amounts</li> <li>• 5 ml (1 tsp) or less a day of the following, with 5% or less DV of sodium: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Mustard</li> <li>› Worcestershire sauce</li> <li>› Relish</li> <li>› Ketchup</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water treated with salt-based water softener</li> <li>• Gatorade® and other sports drinks</li> <li>• Salt, any kind including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Celery salt</li> <li>› Garlic salt</li> <li>› Onion salt</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ac'cent® Flavor Enhancer</li> <li>• Seasoning blends that contain salt or sodium</li> <li>• Pickles</li> <li>• Olives</li> <li>• Soy sauce</li> <li>• Oyster sauce</li> <li>• Salsa, picante, and taco sauces</li> <li>• Poultry and meat coatings</li> <li>• Potato and nacho chips</li> <li>• Salted popcorn, microwave popcorn</li> <li>• Cheezies® and pretzels</li> <li>• Party snacks</li> </ul>

## Speedy Barbeque Sauce

- › 1 cup (250 ml) cider vinegar
  - › 3/4 cup (175 ml) no salt added canned crushed tomatoes
  - › 3 tbsp (45 ml) packed brown sugar
  - › 1 tbsp (15 ml) Worcestershire sauce
  - › 2 tsp (10 ml) hot pepper sauce
  - › 2 tbsp (30 ml) chopped garlic
- Combine all ingredients in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat.
  - Lower heat and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring often.
  - Remove from heat and cool slightly before using.

Makes: 1½ cup

### Per serving (2 tbsp)

- › Calories: 20
- › Sodium: 40 mg
- › Total fat: 0 g
- › Cholesterol: 0 mg
- › Saturated fat: 0 g
- › Carbohydrates: 6 g
- › Fibre: 0 g
- › Protein: 0 g

## **Balsamic Vinaigrette**

- › 1/3 cup (80 ml) chopped onion
- › 3 garlic cloves, minced
- › 1/4 tsp (1 ml) pepper
- › 3/4 cup (175 ml) balsamic vinegar
- › 1/2 cup (125 ml) olive oil
- › 2 tbsp (30 ml) honey or maple syrup
- › 2 tsp (10 ml) dry mustard or 2 tbsp (30 ml) Dijon mustard

Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Use as desired.

## **Per serving (2 tbsp)**

- › Calories: 110
- › Sodium: 60 mg
- › Total fat: 10 g
- › Cholesterol: 0 mg
- › Saturated fat: 1 g
- › Carbohydrates: 6 g
- › Fibre: 0 g
- › Protein: 0 g

## **Salt-free Seasoning Blend**

- › 2 tbsp (30 ml) onion powder
- › 2 tsp (10 ml) garlic powder
- › 2 tsp (10 ml) paprika
- › 2 tsp (10 ml) dry mustard
- › 1 tsp (5 ml) thyme, crushed
- › 1/2 tsp (2 ml) pepper
- › 1/4 tsp (1 ml) dried parsley

Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Use as desired.

Makes: about 1/3 cup (68 ml)

**What are your questions?**

**Please ask. We are here to help you.**

## **When planning meals, follow Canada's Food Guide healthy eating recommendations:**

### **Eat a variety of healthy foods each day.**

- Eat a lot of vegetables and fruits.
- Eat protein foods.
  - › Choose protein foods that come from plants more often.
- Choose whole grain foods.
  - › Limit highly processed foods.
- Make water your drink of choice.
- Replace sugary drinks with water.

### **Be mindful of your eating habits.**

- › Take time to eat.
- › Notice when you are hungry and when you are full.
- Cook more often.
  - › Plan what you eat.
  - › Involve others in planning and making meals.
- Enjoy your food.
  - › Culture and food traditions can be a part of healthy eating.
- Eat meals with others.

## Resources

**For more tips on how to follow a low sodium diet:**

- **Health Canada**
  - › [www.healthcanada.ca](http://www.healthcanada.ca)
- **Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada**
  - › [www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca)
- Do an internet search on:
  - › DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension)
  - › Mediterranean diet

**Visit:**

- › [www.nshealth.ca/sites/nshealth.ca/files/patientinformation/1158.pdf](http://www.nshealth.ca/sites/nshealth.ca/files/patientinformation/1158.pdf)

**For information on using more plant-based proteins:**

- Better with Beans™ (for recipes using beans)
  - › Ontario Bean Growers
  - › <https://ontariobeans.on.ca>

## **Cookbooks**

- There are many cookbooks to help you lower salt in your meals. Any cookbook by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, Dietitians of Canada, or Diabetes Canada has good information. You can find these in most libraries and bookstores.
- Other good cookbooks:
  - › *Hold the Salt*, and *Hold that Hidden Salt* by Maureen Tilley, a local dietitian
  - › *Delicious DASH Flavors*, and *Low Salt DASH Dinners*, by Sandra Nowlan

## **For nutrition counselling:**

Do an internet search for: “ns health nutrition counselling” to see what services are available in your community.

## **Nutrition Education and Counselling (Dietitians)**

- Registered dietitians work in some grocery stores. They offer many services, including store tours.
- Check your local grocery store for help from a registered dietitian. Do an internet search for: “dietitian and (name of your grocery store)”
  - › [www.nshealth.ca/service-details/Nutrition%20Education%20and%20Counselling%20\(Dietitians\)](http://www.nshealth.ca/service-details/Nutrition%20Education%20and%20Counselling%20(Dietitians))



It can be hard to make changes to your eating habits. If you have any questions, please ask to talk with a dietitian. We are here to help you.

Dietitian: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



### **Looking for more health information?**

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <https://library.nshealth.ca/PatientEducation>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

*Nova Scotia Health promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.*

*Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!*

[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

*Prepared by: Nutrition and Food Services*

*Designed by: Nova Scotia Health Library Services*

The information in this brochure is for informational and educational purposes only.

The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

LC85-1161 © January 2022 Nova Scotia Health Authority

The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.