

Salt and its effect on your health / CASH.

Contributors

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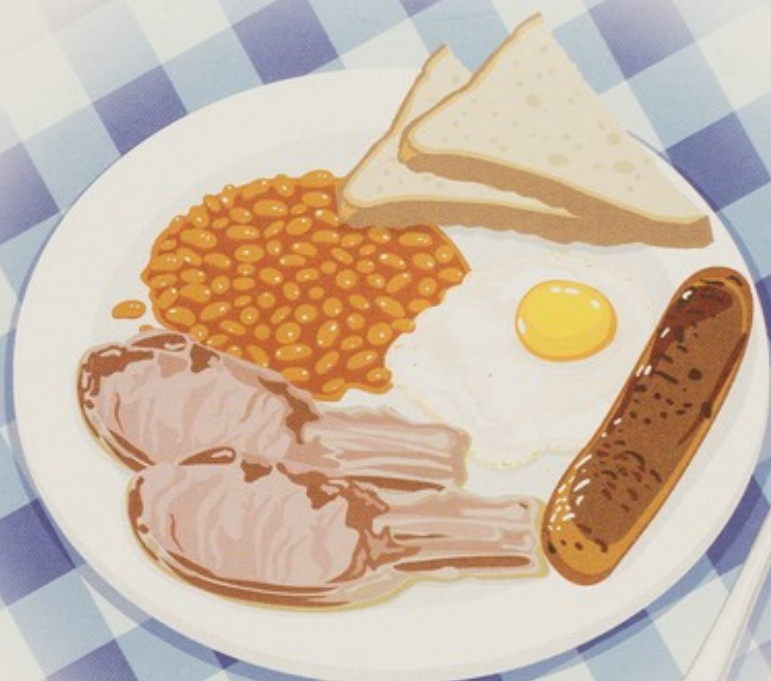
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Salt and its effect on your health



This meal could contain
up to 6.2 grams of salt.

Adults should eat less
than 6g of salt a day.

Salt and your health

A small amount of salt is essential to our wellbeing. Adults need about 1.4 grams and children less than a gram a day which can easily be obtained from eating a balanced diet. However, most adults eat between 9-12g a day. Cutting our salt intake is vital as too much salt has several bad effects on our health. **Adults should eat no more than 6g of salt a day and children far less.**

Blood pressure

Eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure. It's possible to develop high blood pressure at any age. In England, a third of people (men and women) have high blood pressure (hypertension). People with high blood pressure are three times more likely to develop heart disease or have a stroke than people with normal blood pressure. Strokes and heart attacks are the most common cause of death and disability in the UK. Eating less salt will have an immediate effect on lowering blood pressure and reducing the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Reducing your salt intake by around 2.5g a day can reduce your risk of having a stroke or a heart attack by a quarter

If you are of black African descent you are particularly sensitive to salt, and therefore more susceptible to high blood pressure. Reduce your salt intake to 6g a day and reduce your risk of stroke by 45% and heart disease by 35%.

Bone demineralisation and osteoporosis

A high salt intake also causes calcium loss from bones leading to thinning of the bones. Thin bones are more fragile and as we get older this results in more fractures (broken bones) which take longer to heal. In teenagers, particularly girls, a high salt intake could lead to bones not reaching their maximum strength and because of this, an increased risk of osteoporosis in later life.

Stomach cancer

Comparison of different countries around the world shows a close relationship between the amount of salt eaten in the diet and the number of people who develop stomach cancer.

Asthma

A high salt intake has been shown to aggravate the symptoms of asthma. If you suffer from asthma, reducing your salt intake may be beneficial in combination with the other treatments for asthma.

Simple ways to lower your salt intake

Surprisingly, three quarters of the salt we eat is hidden in processed foods and only a quarter comes from salt added either at the table or during cooking. Some foods that we eat every day are not necessarily high in salt, but because we eat plenty of them they contribute a lot to our daily salt intake.

Foods that are often high in salt - cut down on these foods

Anchovies	Noodle snacks/pots	Sausages
Bacon	Olives	Smoked meat and fish
Cheese	Pickles	Soy sauce
Chips (if salt added)	Prawns	Stock cubes and bouillon
Coated chicken e.g. nuggets	Salami	Tinned meat
Gravy granules	Salted and dry roasted nuts	Yeast extract e.g. marmite
Ham	Salt fish	

Foods where some brands are high in salt - check the label

Baked beans	Cooking sauces	Ready meals
Biscuits	Crisps	Soup
Breakfast cereals	Filled pasta	Sandwiches
Bread and bread products*	Meat pies	Table sauces
Burgers	Pasta sauces	Tinned pasta
Cakes and pastries	Pizza	Tomato Ketchup

*bread provides a fifth of our salt intake

Foods which are low in salt

Breakfast cereals** e.g. Shredded Wheat	Homemade bread	Plain cheese spreads
Eggs	Homemade soup	Plain popcorn
Emmental	Low fat yogurt	Unsalted nuts
Fresh meat and poultry	Low fat fromage frais	Seeds
Fruit and Vegetables (fresh, frozen, dried and tinned)***	Ricotta	Porridge
	Mozzarella	Pulses (peas, beans, lentils)***
	Plain cottage cheese	

** with no added salt ***choose tinned products with no added salt

Other simple reductions

- Don't add salt at the table or during cooking. Sea salt and rock salt should also be avoided as these are just as high in salt
- Other high salt flavour enhancers include stock cubes, gravy browning, soy sauce. Choose lower salt versions.
- Use fresh, frozen or dried herbs, spices, chilli, garlic, pepper, vinegar, lemon or lime juice to add flavour instead
- Avoid ketchup, soy sauce, mustard, pickles and mayonnaise – these can all be high in salt
- Food eaten outside the home (food bought in takeaways, workplace canteens, service stations, cafes and restaurants) is often high in salt. Check labels or ask for a lower salt option.

Many processed foods are high in salt so try to cut down on these and switch to more fresh foods such as fish, chicken, meat, fruit and vegetables or check the label and choose a lower salt option.

Give yourself time to adjust to eating less salt

The salty taste of foods depends on the salt content of the food and also the sensitivity of the salt receptors in your mouth. Initially when you reduce your salt intake foods tend to taste bland, but

after two or three weeks your taste receptors become more sensitive, getting the same effect from lower levels of salt and you will start to taste the real delicious flavour of natural food.

Calculating salt from sodium

Some foods are labelled with the sodium content per 100g. To convert sodium to salt multiply by 2.5.

1g or 1000mg of sodium per 100g = 2.5g of salt per 100g

Remember to think about how much of the food you will be eating. Look at the size of the packet and use this as a guide – is this more or less than 100g? From this you can work out the salt content of the portion you will eat.

Recommended maximum salt intakes

Age	Maximum Salt Intake
0 - 6 months	< 1g / day
6 - 12 months	1g / day
1 - 3 years	2g / day
4 - 6 years	3g / day
7 - 10 years	5g / day
11 years and above	6g / day

For further information on salt, cutting down your salt intake and for low salt sandwich fillings, lunch box alternatives and recipes please see our website www.actiononsalt.org.uk



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