

**Salt and eating out consumer guide : don't be afraid to tip your waiter before your meal : pass it on to the chef / CASH.**

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## Salt and Eating Out Consumer Guide

**Don't be afraid  
to tip your waiter  
before your meal.**

### **Pass it on to the chef!**

We don't expect sugar in our coffee so please let us choose how much salt we'd prefer. Eating too much salt puts up your blood pressure and can lead to other medical problems.





**Many of us in the UK eat too much salt. Eating too much salt has several bad effects on our health.**

## **Salt and health**

Eating too much salt can raise our blood pressure and increase our risk of stroke, heart attack or heart failure. Many thousands of people die unnecessarily each year as a result of strokes and heart attacks. These deaths could be prevented.

You may be surprised to learn that too much salt can also lead to other bad effects on our health. For example, a high salt intake causes calcium loss from bones leading to thinning of the bones (osteoporosis). Thin bones are more fragile and as we get older this results in more fractures (broken bones) that take longer to heal.

Eating too much salt is also linked with kidney disease, stroke, osteoporosis, stomach cancer and obesity, and can worsen the symptoms of asthma.

## **Salt in food we cook and eat at home**

Thanks to the work that the food industry has been doing over the past few years, the salt content of many everyday foods has been reduced. This has meant that the average amount of salt we all eat every day is coming down. But we are still a long way from the target maximum salt intake of 6g a day for adults and less for children.



Many of us now check labels for the salt content of the food we buy in supermarkets and shops. By looking at the label we can add up how much salt we are eating each day, and how much we are giving to our families.

Per serving	
<b>FAT</b>	7.7g
<b>SATURATES</b>	2.0g
<b>SUGAR</b>	42.2g
<b>SALT</b>	2.4g
■ HIGH ■ MEDIUM ■ LOW	

10g serving (enough for slices of bread) contains	trace
	<1%
	Fat 5.9g
	8%
	Saturates 1.2g
	6%
	Salt 0.1g
	2%
It's guideline daily amount (GDA)	

Most food labels now give the amount of salt the food contains either per 100grams or per portion. If the label only gives the sodium content, you need to multiply sodium by 2.5 to get the salt content.

## **Salt and eating out**

When we eat out in a restaurant, café or work canteen, or order a takeaway, there is usually no information available on the menu to let us know how much salt there is



in the food we are eating. Some larger restaurant chains have websites which give nutritional information for their meals. However, while checking these websites in advance before you eat out may help you identify lower-salt options, it is time-consuming and often not very practical.



You may be surprised by how much salt there is in some of your favourite meals that you eat in a restaurant or takeaway.

**For example, some Chinese takeaway meals can contain more than 20g of salt** – that's over three times the maximum recommended daily intake for adults.

As we all get used to eating less salt in manufactured and ready-made foods we buy from supermarkets and shops, our taste buds are adjusting and you may notice foods in restaurants tasting more salty and actually becoming inedible.



## Top Tips for eating out

Eating out should be a pleasure, and if you don't want a meal in a restaurant to include loads of hidden salt, either choose items on the menu that tend to be lower in salt or ask for your food to have less salt added to it during cooking. Don't be afraid to ask the chef for little or no salt to be added to your meal. Most chefs will be willing to add less salt to food if you ask.

Asking for less salt to be added to food is easier in some dishes like steaks, grilled fish or chicken which can be prepared and cooked with less salt. Try asking for it to be cooked with no added salt, and then give it a squeeze of lemon juice and a grinding of black pepper at the table.

Ask for any sauces served with your meal to be 'on the side' so that you can taste them and choose how much you want to add or decide whether it is too salty for you. And if you find that your food is a little bland for you, you can always add a little salt at the table – at least it's your choice rather than the chef's. As more and more people ask for less salt in their food when they eat out, the message will get through to chefs that we would like to make our own decisions about how salty our food is – they wouldn't dream of adding sugar to your tea or coffee without asking you, so why should they add so much salt?

## Menu items higher in salt

Some ingredients that chefs add to dishes are already very salty so look out for them on the menu and avoid them if you can (see table below). Beware of ketchup and other sauces – they can contain high levels of salt. Did you know that the leading brand of tomato ketchup contains more salt, weight for weight, than seawater? Would you ever pour seawater all over your food?

### Higher salt ingredients Watch out for these salty ingredients on the menu

Cheese	Prawns
Olives	Smoked salmon
Capers	Soy sauce, Oyster sauce,
Anchovies	Chilli sauce
Cured meats e.g. bacon, ham,	Chips with salt already added
salami, pastrami, salt beef	Chicken with coating e.g. Chicken
Sausages	nuggets, chicken kiev

### Salty sauces Sauces served with your meal can also contain lots of hidden salt

Tomato ketchup	0.5g salt per 20g portion	Tartare sauce	0.8g salt per 30g portion
Brown sauce	0.4g salt per 20g portion	Salad cream	0.5g salt per 20g portion
English mustard	0.2g salt per 2g portion	Thousand Island	0.4g salt per 30g portion
Soy sauce	0.7g salt per 5g portion	French Dressing	0.2g salt per 15g portion
Mayonnaise	0.4g salt per 30g portion		

### Takeaways Remember, these figures don't include extra salt or added sauces

Chow Mein	10.8g salt per meal	Burger and chips	2.9g salt per meal
Chicken Balti	8.7g salt per meal	Fish and chips	1.2g salt per meal
Doner Kebab	8.6g salt per meal	Southern fried	
Small pepperoni		chicken and chips	3.0g salt per meal
pizza for 1	4.0g salt per meal	Average salt content. Salt levels may vary greatly.	

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

For further information on healthy eating please visit [www.eatwell.gov.uk](http://www.eatwell.gov.uk)  
[www.salt.gov.uk](http://www.salt.gov.uk)



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