



Community Health Connections

The Bantam Commons
120 Hollywood Drive, Suite 201
Butler, PA 16001
Phone: (724) 283-0990
Fax: (724) 283-1012
Website: www.hcqu.org

Fact Sheet

Low Sodium Diet

Sodium is a mineral that is necessary for good health and is present in all foods. You will sometimes see the term abbreviated "Na" as in NaCl which is Sodium Chloride, otherwise known as table salt. If your body can not get rid of extra sodium, fluid builds up and causes heart and kidneys to work harder and may increase blood pressure.

Low sodium diet includes no more than 2000 to 3000 mg of sodium per day (This is the same as 2 to 3 grams of sodium a day). Low sodium is usually recommended for people with mild to severe Congestive Heart Failure (CHF). Always check with your healthcare provider on the sodium limit or recommendations that are right for you.

There are three main sources of sodium

- Table salt - 1 tsp of salt has 2300 mg of sodium
- Processed foods - have large amounts of sodium - soups, vegetables, frozen dinners etc.
- Some sodium is found naturally in most foods

Other sources of sodium are non-prescription medications (antacids, laxatives, aspirin, cough medicines and mouthwash). Talk to your pharmacist or doctor for more information on these items.

You can take four basic steps to reduce amounts of sodium in your diet:

- Stop adding salt to your food
- Adapt your preferred foods to low-sodium versions
- Pick foods naturally low in sodium
- Read food labels

Foods that are naturally low in sodium:

- Fresh foods such as fresh fruit, vegetables, and fresh meat, fish and poultry
- Dried beans, peas, rice, pasta and lentils are excellent low sodium food
- Other good options include canned fruits, yogurt (plain or fruit flavored) and plain frozen vegetables

Reading food labels:

- Is essential part of a low sodium diet
- Learning which foods are high and low in sodium is beneficial for meal planning and grocery shopping
- When reading the label, always look at the *serving size*, *servings per container*, and the *sodium content* first. The amount of sodium is listed *per serving*.
 - **Example (right):** A 16oz can of chicken noodle soup has 2.5 servings. The label states a serving size contains 890mg of sodium. On a 2000mg low sodium diet, one serving of the soup is 37% of the daily allowance. The total sodium in the can of soup would be 2225mg – that's 225 mg more than the daily allowance of sodium.

Chicken Noodle Soup		
Nutrition Facts		
Serving Size 1/2 cup (120 ml) condensed soup		
Servings Per Container about 2.5		
Amount Per Serving		
Calories 60	Calories from Fat 15	
% Daily Value*		
Total Fat 1.5g	2%	
Saturated Fat 0.5g	3%	
Trans Fat 0g		
Cholesterol 15mg		
Sodium 890mg	37%	
Total Carbohydrate 8g	3%	
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%	
Sugars 1g		
Protein 3g		
Vitamin A 4%	Calcium 0%	
Vitamin C 0%	Iron 2%	
*Percent Daily Values are based on a diet of 2,000 calories.		
Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.		
	Calories 2000	2500
Total Fat	Less than 55g	55g
Sat Fat	Less than 30g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg	2400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g	375g
Dietary Fiber	25g	30g

Tracking your sodium intake:

- Keep record of everything you eat and drink including snacks
- Record even food items that are not labeled such as homemade foods, soups, desserts etc.
- Add up your sodium intake for each day
- Review list with your healthcare provider and discuss the sodium intake amount that is right for you

For additional information on low sodium diet, visit www.hfsa.org or call us at 724-283-0990