



The Salt Box

What's so bad about Salt?

Three Ways to Shake Our Salt Habit

We currently consume about 2 heaping teaspoons of salt (4,000 mg of sodium) a day! The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute estimate that 400 Americans die each day of heart attacks, strokes and other diseases caused by salt's impact on our blood pressure. By eating extra salt, our bodies retain fluid. This raises blood volume, which forces our hearts to work harder; at the same time, it makes our veins and arteries constrict. This combination causes our blood pressure to rise.



1. **Reduce Eating Out.** We know, you like to eat out. Who doesn't? Yet, the restaurant industry continues to behave as though salt doesn't matter. Salt does matter. Did you know that by reducing your sodium intake to 2,300 mg (found in 1 teaspoon of salt), you could drop your systolic blood pressure by 2 to 8 points? Here's the amount of sodium found in a random sampling of menus:



Chain:	Menu Item:	Sodium (mg)
Dairy Queen®	Chicken Strip Basket (1 order)	2,400
Denny's®	Meat Lovers Scramble (23 Oz)	4,170
McDonalds®	Quarter Pounder® with cheese	1,190
Pizza Hut®	Pepperoni Lovers® pizza, pan (2 slices)	1,520
Starbucks®	Cake, Iced Lemon Loaf (1 slice)	540
	w/ white chocolate mocha (12 fl oz.)	200

2. **Read the Label.** Three-quarters of the sodium in our diet comes from processed foods. Choose processed foods with less than 5 percent of the Daily Value for sodium in each serving. And, remember, sodium is added to some foods you'd never suspect as being "salty", all to extend the shelf life of the product. Here's a sampling of grocery shelf items that aren't "the usual suspects":

Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%

Brand Name:	Food Item:	Sodium (mg)
Chex® Cereal	Multi-bran (3/4 cup)	310
Bakery Item	Blueberry bagel (1 large)	600
Boboli®	Pizza crust (1 8-inch)	800
Shopping mall type	Soft pretzel (1 large)	1,035
Commercial	Chocolate pudding, instant, (1/2 cup)	445

3. **Eat More Fresh Fruits & Vegetables, Lowfat Dairy and Whole Grains.** These foods contain more potassium, magnesium and calcium; three minerals, which help our arteries, relax, regulate sodium and water in the bloodstream and thus, keep our blood pressure under control. These foods are touted on the DASH Diet, which lowered systolic blood pressure 8 to 14 points.



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