

Tips to Reduce Salt

Are you aware of how much salt is in your foods?

Salt is made from sodium and chloride. Sodium is in many of the foods you eat day to day including cereals, yogurts, dried fruits, canned tunas and your 'healthy' frozen meals. The food doesn't have to taste salty to have high levels. Check the labels, some foods labelled as healthy have alarmingly high levels of sodium. One meal and you can have consumed a day's worth of sodium.

We do need salt, but most of us consume too much. Sodium controls fluid balance in the body. Too much salt is linked to high blood pressure, which puts you at risk to cardiovascular and kidney disease. It also causes fluid retention. Too little sodium may cause low blood pressure.

We need 460 mg a day for good health. The National Health and Medical Research Centre's (NHMRC) advises that adults should aim to consume no more 1,600mg of sodium in order to prevent chronic disease. It is estimated that most of us consume double this.

Try for a day recording the sodium you consume. Just one processed meal per day can have you eating through your limit.

- McDonalds Crispy Chicken Tandoori Wrap: 955 mg
- McDonalds Might Angus Burger: 1360 mg
- McDonalds Large Chocolate Milkshake: 411mg
- McDonalds Large Fries: 435 mg
- John West Tuna & Bean 185g, roasted capsicum: 700mg
- Coles Tuna Sweet Chilli 95g: 555mg
- Lite n Easy, Braised Chicken & Almonds frozen meal: 1370mg
- Burgen Rye Bread, 2 slices: 325 mg

Reading labels:

Check the % of daily intake column on the label. This percentage will be based on the NHMRC target. Alternatively check the quantity per 100g to compare different foods.

1. Low salt/sodium: up to 120mg/100g
2. High salt/sodium: more than 600mg/100g

Tips to reduce sodium:

1. Avoid processed meats, fast food and canned foods. Choose fresh.
2. Prepare meals yourself so that you are in control.
3. Use herbs, spices, lemon or vinegars for flavour rather the pre made sauces or marinades.
4. Do not put salt on the table at meals.
5. Try gradually reducing your salt intake with meals, taste buds do adjust.