

Clinical Nutrition Department



Limiting Sodium

Our body needs sodium (salt) to be healthy. However, your child may need to eat less sodium because of their diagnosis. Lowering the amount of sodium your child eats can:

- Improve blood pressure
- Decrease fluid retention
- May help prevent kidney stones

In general, children who need to limit their sodium should get between 2000 and 3000 milligrams (mg) of sodium per day. Your child's dietitian and medical team will work with you to decide what limit is needed.

Sodium in Foods

Only small amounts of sodium are found naturally in most foods. Most of the sodium you eat is added during the making of food. Fresh foods contain less sodium than prepared or processed foods. We measure the sodium we eat in milligrams (mg).

Six Tips for Lowering Sodium

1. Do not add salt to foods.

Take the salt shaker off the table, so you won't be tempted. The most common form of sodium is sodium chloride. This is better known as table salt.

One teaspoon of table salt contains 2,300 mg of sodium.

2. Do not eat foods that have salt you can see on top.

Avoid these foods or look for lower sodium versions:

- Pretzels
- Potato chips
- Nuts
- Crackers

3. Learn to read the food label.

Some foods may have a lot of sodium even if they do not taste salty. Reading the label will tell you exactly how much sodium is in a food item.

4. Use other seasonings instead of salt when cooking foods.

There are many herbs and spices that can make food taste great without adding any sodium. Try adding these seasonings instead of salt:

- Herbs (basil, thyme, oregano, parsley, etc.)
- Spices (black pepper, anise, cumin, sage, etc.)
- Garlic, onions, or peppers
- Lemon or lime juice

(Do not use salt substitute.)

5. Prepare foods at home, so you can control the amount of sodium.

- Eat fresh and frozen foods instead of canned, processed, or pickled foods.
- If using canned foods, rinse under water to remove some of the sodium.
- Select no-sodium or low-sodium foods when available.
- Do not cook with mixes or instant products that already contain sodium.

6. Choose carefully when eating away from home.

- Check on sodium content before ordering.
- Order foods that are baked, broiled, or grilled.
- Remove any skin from meats.
- Choose fresh vegetables.
- Watch out for salad dressing. This can be very high in sodium.

The Food Label

The food label will help you know how much sodium a food contains. The food label is also called the Nutrition Facts.

1. Look at the serving size!

- Are you eating the same amount that is on the label? If you eat double the serving listed, you have to double the sodium value.

2. Look at the milligrams (mg) of sodium.

- Try to eat foods with less than 140 mg of sodium per serving.

Example:

Look at the label on the right.

- The serving size is 1 oz, which equals 21 pieces.
 - This label also tells you there are 2 servings in the container.
- The mg of sodium is 250 mg.
 - This food contains more than the recommended 140 mg sodium per serving.

You may need to do some math.

- If you ate 42 pieces (2 oz or a full container), you would be eating 500 mg of sodium.
 - 2 times the serving size, so $250 \text{ mg} \times 2$
- If you ate 11 pieces ($\frac{1}{2}$ oz), you would be eating 125 mg of sodium.
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ the serving size, so $250 \text{ mg} \div 2$

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 oz. (28g/About 21 pieces)	
Servings Per Container About 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 170	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 11g	17%
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 250mg	10%
Total Carbohydrate 14g	5%
Dietary Fiber less than 1g	2%
Sugars 0g	
Protein 2g	
Vitamin A 2%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 0%	Iron 4%
Vitamin E 6%	Thiamin 4%
Riboflavin 2%	Niacin 4%
Vitamin B ₆ 2%	Phosphorus 2%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:	
	Calories: 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g
Calories per gram:	
Fat 9	Carbohydrate 4 Protein 4

Label Lingo

You may see words on the label that can help you choose lower sodium foods. Always read the Nutrition Facts to see exactly how much sodium is in the food.

Sodium free or salt free	means less than 5 mg sodium per serving
Very low sodium	means 35 mg or less sodium per serving
Low sodium	means 140 mg or less sodium per serving
Reduced or less sodium	means at least 25% less sodium than the regular version
Light in sodium	means 50% less sodium than the regular version
Unsalted or no salt added	means no salt added to the product during processing (does not mean it is a sodium-free food)

Fresh Foods

Some fresh foods do not have a food label. They are usually low in sodium. Use this table as a guide:

Food	Sodium (mg)
Vegetables	
Fresh or frozen, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup	1-70 mg
Fruit	
Fresh or frozen, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup	0-5 mg
Meats and Beans	
Dried Beans, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup prepared	0-5 mg
Fresh meat, fish, or poultry, 3 oz.	30-90 mg

Low Sodium Guidelines

The table below will help you know what foods to eat in each food group.

Food Groups	Foods Allowed (Lower Sodium Foods)	Foods Not Allowed (Higher Sodium Foods)
Beverages (non-dairy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water • Low sodium carbonated beverages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gatorade®, Powerade®
Breads/Cereals/ Grains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breads • English muffins • Cold cereals • Low sodium chips, crackers and popcorn • Regular cooked hot cereals, such as oats, cream of wheat or grits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potato and corn chips • Saltine crackers, pretzels, porkskins, or any crackers with salted tops. • Chow mein noodles • Salted popcorn • Stuffing mixes • Instant quick-cooking cereals
Meat/Poultry/ Fish/Eggs/Nuts/ Beans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh meats • Low sodium canned fish • Eggs • Dry beans or peas • Unsalted nuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoked, cured, salted or canned meats, including bacon, sausage, or ham • Hot dogs • Luncheon meat (bologna, salami, etc.) • Corned beef • Canned fish (tuna, salmon, sardines, etc.) • Salted nuts
Milk/Yogurt/ Cheese/ Supplements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yogurt • Ice cream • Pudding • Low-fat/fat-free milk • Low sodium cheeses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buttermilk • Ovaltine® • Malts • Cheese spread, cottage cheese, ricotta cheese and processed cheeses
Fruits/Fruit Juice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh or frozen fruits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Vegetables/ Vegetable Juice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh or frozen vegetables • Low sodium canned vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sauerkraut • Pickles, pickle relish • Olives • V-8® juice, tomato juice • Canned tomato sauces • Marinated artichokes • Any vegetable that has been pickled • Canned vegetables
Condiments/ Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pepper • Mrs. Dash® • Lemon wedges • Low sodium ketchup • Jellies, honey • Low sodium salad dressings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ketchup, BBQ sauce • Bacon bits • Salad dressings • Bouillon cubes, canned broth • Gravy mixes • Soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, steak sauce, Tabasco sauce, tarter sauce • Meat tenderizers • Onion, garlic and celery salt • Frozen dinners • Hidden forms of sodium: MSG, sodium nitrite, sodium saccharin, baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) and sodium benzoate
Desserts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gelatin • Sherbet • Fruit ice • Angel food cake • Salt-free baked goods • Homemade pudding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular commercially prepared and packaged baked goods • Chocolate candy • Instant puddings