

Low Sodium Diet

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

What is a Low Sodium diet?

A low sodium diet is generally considered to be less than or equal to 2 grams of sodium (or 2,000 mg) intake a day. A low sodium diet limits high sodium foods.

What are the effects of a diet high in sodium?

When your kidneys are not functioning properly, they do not filter out sodium, thus potentially leading to a number of health issues.

Excess sodium can cause:

- An increase your blood pressure
- Swollen ankles (edema)
- Puffiness around the eyes
- Shortness of breath
- Weight gain from “water” weight



What are some “DO’s and Don’ts” regarding a low sodium diet?

Do:

- Read all food labels carefully for sodium content of food you are purchasing at the grocery store
 - General rule of thumb to follow; if salt is listed in the first five ingredients, the item most likely is too high in sodium.
- Avoid food that are greater than or equal to 500 mg of sodium per serving
- Use no salt added substitutes for flavoring your meals (i.e., Mrs. Dash) or spices/herbs to season your cooking
- Start slowly with your changes, decreasing sodium intake so your body adjusts
- Limit processed (lunchmeats) and canned foods (soups/vegetables) on a low sodium diet
- Be mindful of and try to avoid the “Salty Six” (American Heart Association), which include:
 - Breads, rolls, bagels, flour tortillas, and wraps
 - Cold cuts and cured meats
 - Pizza
 - Some Poultry
 - Some poultry and other meats may be injected with sodium – check the nutrition label
 - Soup
 - Sandwiches
- Avoid medications with a high sodium content (i.e., Alka Seltzer or Sodium Bicarbonate)

Don’t:

- Have a salt shaker readily available while you are cooking or have salt shaker on the table while eating
 - 1 tsp of table salt = 2,300 mg of sodium!**
- Don’t substitute low salt with regular salt
 - Manufacturers often replace Sodium with Potassium, which may not be a healthy alternative



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What are some food choices that I can and cannot eat on a low sodium diet?

| Food Categories | Foods to limit and/or avoid | Acceptable Food Choices |
|---|--|--|
| Meats and Proteins | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Red meat (i.e., beef, lamb, pork) ▪ Fish ▪ Poultry ▪ Legumes ▪ Eggs ▪ Nuts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No more than 2-3 servings/week ▪ Smoked, cured, salted or canned meats, including but not limited to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bacon ▪ Lunchmeats ▪ Ham ▪ Hot dogs ▪ Sausages ▪ Sardines ▪ Anchovies ▪ Salted nuts ▪ Spam | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2-3 servings/day ▪ Fresh or frozen meats (i.e., beef, poultry, fish, lamb) ▪ Eggs or egg substitute ▪ Low sodium peanut butter ▪ Unsalted nuts ▪ Low sodium canned fish (i.e., tuna or salmon) ▪ May also include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low sodium frozen dinners (less than 600 mg of sodium) |
| Milk and Dairy | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Buttermilk ▪ Processed and hard cheeses (i.e., American, Cheddar, blue cheese) ▪ Regular cottage cheese | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2-3 servings/day ▪ Milk (1/% or skim) ▪ Ice Cream/frozen yogurt (light or skim) ▪ Yogurt (light or skim) ▪ Sour cream (light or skim) ▪ Low sodium cheeses (i.e. Swiss, goat, ricotta) ▪ Light cream cheese |
| Fruits and Vegetables | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Canned vegetables ▪ Canned beans ▪ Marinated vegetables (i.e., sauerkraut, pickles, olives) ▪ Regular tomato juice or V-8 Juice ▪ Packaged mixes (i.e., scalloped potatoes, au gratin potatoes) ▪ Vegetables made with ham, bacon or salted pork | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5 or more servings per day ▪ Fresh or frozen, canned or dried fruits ▪ Fresh or frozen vegetables without sauces ▪ Low sodium tomato juice or V-8 Juice ▪ Low sodium tomato sauce ▪ Fresh potatoes, no salt French fries |



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| Food Categories | Foods to limit and/or avoid | Acceptable Food Choices |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Breads and Grains | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular potato chips ▪ Pretzels ▪ Popcorn ▪ Salted nuts ▪ Pork rinds ▪ Angel food cake ▪ Cookies/pies/brownies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 6 or more servings/day ▪ Unsalted nuts ▪ Low sodium potato chips, pretzels, popcorn ▪ Sherbet, sorbet, Italian ice ▪ Fig bars ▪ Gingersnaps |
| Beverages and Soups | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Malted milk, milkshakes & chocolate milk ▪ Regular canned and dehydrated soups ▪ Broth, noodles with seasoned ramen mixes ▪ Cola drinks ▪ Regular vegetable or tomato juice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low sodium canned soups ▪ Low sodium butter or margarine ▪ Low sodium salad dressing ▪ Low sodium vegetable or tomato juice |
| Fats, Oils and Condiments | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meat tenderizers and marinades ▪ Monosodium Glutamate (MSG) ▪ Soy and teriyaki sauces ▪ Barbeque sauce ▪ Worcestershire sauce ▪ Sea salt, rock salt, kosher salt | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lemon juice ▪ Herbs and spices without salt ▪ Low sodium catsup ▪ Low sodium soy sauce |

This information is for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace the advice of your healthcare provider. Please discuss any questions you have with your physician or healthcare provider.

References

- Dietary Guidelines for Americans Accessed 5/3/2017 <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>
- American Heart Association. Sodium blog Accessed 5/3/2017 <https://sodiumbreakup.heart.org/blog>