

Kids Kitchen: Sneaky Sodium

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Sodium is a necessary part of our diet. Sodium helps our bodies keep the right amount of water,

but we only need a little bit.

The most common form of sodium is found in table salt, which is called sodium chloride. Most foods naturally have at least a small amount of sodium in them. Processed foods, on the other hand, have much more. Sodium is a cheap way to add flavor and to keep foods fresh longer.



Rate Your Sodium Intake

How often do you...	Less than one time per week	1 or 2 times per week	3 to 5 times per week	Almost every day
eat cured or processed meats, such as ham, bacon, sausage, hot dogs, or lunch meat?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
choose commercially prepared foods, such as canned or instant soups, or frozen dinners?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
eat potato chips, popcorn, corn chips, pretzels, or salted nuts?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
salt your food before tasting it?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
add salt, salad dressing, or condiments such as ketchup, steak sauce, mustard, or soy sauce to your foods?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

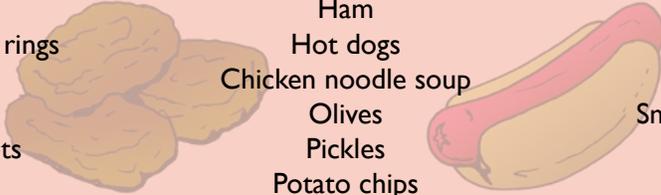
If you have three or more checks in the last two columns, you probably need to cut back on some of these foods. However, not all foods contribute the same amount of sodium. Learn to read food labels and choose foods lower in sodium.

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**It is recommended that we eat no more than 2,300 mg of sodium - about 1 teaspoon of table salt - each day.
To do that, choose lower-sodium foods more often.**

Stop!

These foods are often high in sodium. Limit these foods:

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Bacon | Ham | Ramen noodles |
| Canned spaghetti rings | Hot dogs | Salted nuts |
| Cheese | Chicken noodle soup | Sausages |
| Chips | Olives | Smoked meat and fish |
| Chicken nuggets | Pickles | Soy sauce |
| Gravy | Potato chips | |
- 

Take it Slow!

Some of these foods are high in sodium – check the label to decide if it is a healthy choice. Go easy with these foods:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Baked beans | Instant breakfast cereals
(oatmeal, cream of wheat, etc.) | Ready-to-eat meals |
| Biscuits | Instant rice | Salad dressing |
| Burgers | Macaroni and cheese | Saltine crackers |
| Cakes and pastries | Ravioli | Sausages |
| Cooking sauces | Pasta sauces | Soup |
| Crisps | Pizza | Tomato ketchup |
- 

Go! Go! Go!

These foods are often low in sodium. Eat more of these:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Couscous | Graham crackers | Pudding |
| Eggs | Milk | Seeds |
| Fish | Old-fashioned oatmeal | Unsalted nuts |
| Fresh fruits | Pasta and rice | Whole-grain breads |
| Fresh vegetables | Peas, beans, and lentils | Yogurt |
| | Plain popcorn | |
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Reviewer: Stephanie K. Goodwin, RD, FNP graduate assistant

Reviewed by Kathy Hosig, Ph.D., MPH, RD, Associate Professor, Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine

Sources:
United States Dietary Guidelines (USDA); <http://www.health.gov/DietaryGuidelines/>
<http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/DietaryGuidelines/2005/2005DGConsumerBrochure.pdf>
American Dietetic Association (ADA); http://eatright.org/ada/files/Get_Smart.pdf, http://eatright.org/ada/files/Mrs_Dash.pdf

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