USDA Food and Nutrition Administration
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Developing a Taste for Less Sodium

Sodium (salt) is found in many foods we eat, even if they do not taste salty. Children, like adults, get more sodium than their bodies need.

If salty foods are eaten often, children may develop a preference for salt in foods. By offering foods and drinks that are lower in sodium, adults can help children develop healthy eating patterns. Starting early in life can be easier than trying to change eating habits later on. This may help reduce the risk of certain health problems like high blood pressure.

How Much Sodium Is Too Much?

Children ages 1–3 years should get less than 1,200 milligrams (mg) of sodium per day. Children ages 4–8 years should get less than 1,500 mg per day.

Discuss the daily nutrient recommendations that are right for your child with your healthcare provider.

How Can I Find the Lower Sodium Option?

The Nutrition Facts label on food packages lists the amount of sodium in a food. Compare the amount of sodium in similar types of foods, such as crackers, and choose the ones that are lower in sodium. Whole, nutrient-dense foods often have less sodium than highly processed packaged foods.

Nutrition Facts

8 servings per container

Serving size **16 Pieces (31g)**

Amount per serving

Calories **140**

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 5g	**6%**
Saturated Fat 0g	**0%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	**0%**
Sodium 200mg	**9%**

Nutrition Facts

8 servings per container

Serving size **16 Pieces (31g)**

Amount per serving

Calories **140**

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 5g	**6%**
Saturated Fat 0g	**0%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	**0%**
Sodium 55mg	**2%**

How Can I Lower Sodium in Meals and Snacks?

Here are a few strategies that can lower the amount of sodium you and your family eat:

At the grocery store:

- Buy unprocessed protein foods such as beans, eggs, nuts, poultry, seafood, and red meat instead of prepared, processed, and ready-to-eat meat and poultry. Examples of processed and prepared meats and poultry are sausages, bologna, frankfurters (hot dogs), luncheon meats (deli meats), pepperoni, and pre-marinated options.
- Choose real, whole, nutrient-dense foods to prepare meals and snacks with less sodium. These foods include protein foods from both animal and plant sources, dairy, vegetables, fruits, healthy fats, and unrefined, whole grains.
- Look at labels on canned and packaged foods. Choose unsalted (no salt added), low-sodium, reduced sodium, or lightly salted foods instead of regular versions.
- Buy fruits and vegetables as snacks instead of chips, pretzels, and other salty snacks.

At home:

Rinse canned beans and vegetables under cold water.

Use herbs and spices instead of salt.

Cook at home more often.

How Can I Cook Foods With Lower Sodium Ingredients?

Herbs, spices, garlic, lemon juice, and vinegars are examples of ingredients you can use to add flavor to foods without adding salt. Avoid seasoning blends that contain sodium or salt (like garlic salt, seasoning salt, etc.). Try "Fish and Veggie Packets" at your next meal. Find this recipe and more at **www.theicn.org/cnrb**.

Learn more about healthy eating at **RealFood.gov**.

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