

HIDDEN SALT AND YOUR HEALTH

Sodium is an essential mineral found in salt and can occur naturally in the foods we eat or be added. A small amount of sodium in our diet is necessary to be healthy. However, many Ontarians are unaware of how much salt is in their food and are surprised to learn that their favourite pre-packaged foods, like frozen pizza, soups and canned vegetables can be very high in sodium. Most importantly, some Ontarians are unaware of the negative effects it can have on their health. High sodium diets are a major risk factor for high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke and kidney disease. Sodium intake has also been associated with a higher risk of stomach cancer, severity of asthma and osteoporosis.

Although a sprinkling of salt in the kitchen or at the dinner table is the most visible source of salt in our diets, it provides a very small proportion of our total salt intake. 1 teaspoon or 2300 mg of common table salt is the upper accepted limit of sodium that is considered healthy. This is significantly higher than the 1.5 teaspoons or 3400 mg that the average Canadian consumes daily.

With greater awareness and better understanding of salt, sodium, and possible health effects, patients have the tools to make more informed, healthier food choices. If you have an existing heart-related illness and want to learn more about sodium and your daily intake, or you are concerned that the sodium in your diet is affecting your health, make an appointment to talk to your family doctor.



HOW MUCH SODIUM SHOULD I BE CONSUMING?

Your daily intake of sodium depends on a variety of factors, such as age or if you are pregnant. Below you can find the right number of sodium for you based on Health Canada's recommendations.

Age	Adequate intake of sodium	Healthy amount of sodium intake without going over the Upper Limit
Infants 0-6 months	120 mg/day	No data
Infants 7-12 months	370 mg/day	No data
Children 1-3 years	1000 mg/day	1500 mg/day
Children 4-8 years	1200 mg/day	1900 mg/day
Teens 9-13 years	1500 mg/day	2200 mg/day
Adults 14-50 years	1500 mg/day	2300 mg/day
Older adults 51-70 years	1300 mg/day	2300 mg/day
Older adults over 70 years	1200 mg/day	2300 mg/day
Pregnancy	1500 mg/day	2300 mg/day

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