

Salt

Practical tips for cutting down on salt

- Check food labels to find those with less added salt.
- Cut down on salty snacks, such as crisps and nuts, and heavily salted foods – this includes many ready-prepared meals, bacon, cheese, pickles and smoked fish.
- Look out for other forms of sodium used as flavour enhancers and preservatives, such as monosodium glutamate and sodium bicarbonate.
- Cut down on sauces, especially soy sauce, because these are usually very high in salt.
- Choose lower-salt stock cubes, make your own stock or add more herbs and spices for flavour instead.
- Choose tinned vegetables and pulses that are marked 'no added salt'.
- Add less salt to your cooking.
- Get out of the habit of adding salt to your food at the table (try to remember to taste it first).



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When you're trying to make a healthy choice, most people should aim to:

- eat more fruit and vegetables
- eat more starchy foods such as bread, pasta and rice
- cut down on fat (especially saturates)
- cut down on salt and sugar

Why should I cut down on salt?

Eating too much salt could raise blood pressure. And high blood pressure, also called hypertension, increases the risk of stroke and heart disease.

It's actually the sodium in salt that can lead to health problems – and most of the sodium in our diet comes from salt.

How much salt should I be eating?

Most people are eating too much salt. On average, we are having about 9g salt a day but we should be having no more than 6g salt a day. This means we are having about 3.5g sodium a day when we should be having only about 2.5g sodium a day.

And children under 11 should be having less than this.



What is a lot or a little?

If you want to make a healthy choice when you're choosing which products to buy, you might find it useful to check the nutrition information on the label.

You'll see figures for the sodium content on many food labels.

Use the following as a guide to what is a lot and what is a little sodium per 100g food.

This is A LOT of sodium

0.5g sodium or more per 100g

This is A LITTLE sodium

0.1g sodium or less per 100g

This means if you have a 500g ready-prepared meal that contains 0.5g sodium per 100g, you'll be getting 2.5g sodium from the meal. This is the amount we should be having in a whole day.

If the quantity on the label falls between the figures given in the table above, this is a moderate amount of sodium.



How can I cut down on salt?

Three-quarters of the salt we eat comes from processed food – such as tinned or packet soups and ready-prepared meals. So always remember to check food labels to find those with less added salt. See **What is a lot or a little?** on the previous page.

The salt we add to food when we are cooking, or at the table, and the salt found naturally in most foods makes up a quarter of the salt in our diets.

See the next page for some practical tips to help you cut down.

