

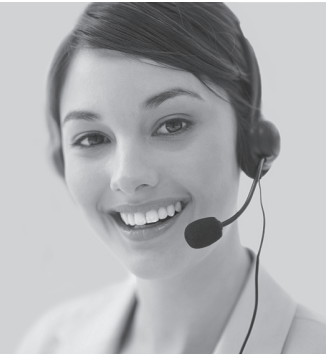
**Eat Fewer Processed Foods  
to Eat Less Sodium**

“It was great to talk with you.

Thank you for your interest in ‘Eat Fewer Processed Foods to Eat Less Sodium.’  
I hope you find this tip sheet helpful.

Please give me a call if you have more questions about this or other topics.

As your health coach, I’m ready to help in any way I can.”



The chemical name for salt is sodium chloride. Eating too much sodium is linked to increased blood pressure. Did you know that more than 75 percent of the sodium Americans eat is from processed foods in the form of salt and sodium additives?

It’s best to cut back on high-sodium foods slowly. Many (but not all) high-sodium foods taste salty, which is pleasant to most of us. Also, salt can help bring out the other flavors in foods. If you cut back on sodium slowly over time, your taste buds will adjust. You will begin to find the same salty taste “too salty.” It may take a month or two for that to happen.

**Eat mostly fresh foods.**

Nearly all fresh foods are low in sodium. Examples are fresh vegetables, fruits, meat, poultry, fish, milk, yogurt, and grains. To keep fresh foods low in sodium:

- Don’t add salt in cooking. For example, don’t salt the water to cook pasta, rice, or hot cereal.
- Don’t season with salt or salty condiments. For example, don’t put ketchup on a hamburger.
- Limit foods with additives that contain sodium (Food companies add them to many foods for different reasons.) Examples are:
  - Sodium nitrate, used to cure ham, bacon, and other meats
  - Sodium benzoate, used to keep many foods from spoiling (such as salad dressing)
  - Sodium bicarbonate, used to help bread rise

The 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that adults **eat less than 2,300 mg. of sodium per day.**

Note: The DV for sodium on the Nutrition Facts label is 2,400 mg. Don’t let this confuse you. It will be updated when the food labeling law is updated.

How much should *you* limit sodium? It depends on many factors. For example, if you have hypertension or pre-hypertension, a limit of 1,500 mg. per day may be best. Talk with your doctor about what is right for you.



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**Limit processed foods.**

The sodium in processed foods comes from:

- Salt added for flavor (Salt is made up of sodium and chloride. Example foods with salt added for flavor: buttermilk, cheese, bread, breakfast cereals, canned soups, canned beans, canned tuna, and canned vegetables)
- Other salty flavorings, such as soy sauce
- Sodium-containing additives, such as those that help preserve foods

Most processed foods are high in sodium, including:

- Canned foods, such as soups, stews, broth, fish, vegetables, and canned beans
- Processed cheese and meats, such as hot dogs, ham, bacon, sausage, and luncheon meats
- Foods cured in brine, such as olives, pickles, and sauerkraut
- Condiments and cooking products, such as ketchup, barbecue sauce, and steak sauce
- Dried foods, such as soups and mixes for pancakes, quick breads, potatoes, rice, or stuffing
- Frozen dinners and frozen vegetables with sauce

Look at how processing tomatoes affects the sodium content:

- 1 cup of raw, chopped tomatoes has 20 milligrams.
- 1 cup of canned stewed tomatoes has 690 milligrams.
- 1 cup of canned tomato sauce has 1,480 milligrams!

**Keep in mind that not all high-sodium foods taste salty**

Some high-sodium foods may taste salty to you. Examples are salted nuts, pretzels, and chips. Others may not. Examples are many breads, breakfast cereals, and soups.

Did you know that a 3½-inch bagel contains more sodium than two single serving bags of potato chips?



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## Eat Fewer Processed Foods to Eat Less Sodium

### Compare labels for sodium.

Some food companies have lowered the sodium in their processed foods. Be sure to compare packages for sodium content. Here's how:

1. Find the Nutrition Facts label on the package.
2. Look at the serving size. Is this how much you ate?
3. Look at the milligrams (mg) of sodium. (A milligram is a unit of weight.) This is how much sodium is in the serving size on the label. Foods that contain 140 mg. of sodium or less per serving are considered low in sodium.
4. What if you eat more than that? You will be eating more sodium than is on the label. What if you eat less than the serving size? You will be eating less sodium than is on the label.
5. Look at the percent daily value (%DV). Is it 5% (120 mg) or less? The food is low in sodium. Is it 20% (480 mg) or more? The food is high in sodium. Beware! If you eat more than the serving size on the label, the %DV will be that much greater.

**Practice:** Look at the labels below. Which food is low in sodium? Let's say you ate one cup of the regular canned tomatoes. How many milligrams of sodium did you eat? The answers are at the bottom of the page.

#### Whole Peeled Tomatoes, Canned

**INGREDIENTS:** TOMATOES, TOMATO JUICE, SALT, CITRIC ACID, CALCIUM CHLORIDE

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size 1/2 Cup (121g)	
Servings Per Container about 3.5	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 25	Calories from Fat 0
%Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 0g	<b>0%</b>
Saturated Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 220mg	<b>9%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 5g	<b>2%</b>
Dietary Fiber 1g	<b>4%</b>
Sugars 3g	
<b>Protein</b> 1g	

#### Whole Peeled Tomatoes, Canned No Salt Added

**INGREDIENTS:** TOMATOES, TOMATO JUICE, CITRIC ACID, CALCIUM CHLORIDE

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size 1/2 Cup (121g)	
Servings Per Container about 3.5	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 25	Calories from Fat 0
%Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 0g	<b>0%</b>
Saturated Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 20mg	<b>1%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 5g	<b>2%</b>
Dietary Fiber 1g	<b>4%</b>
Sugars 3g	
<b>Protein</b> 1g	

**Answers:** The tomatoes with no salt added are low in sodium. The serving size for the regular canned tomatoes is 1/2 cup. That amount contains 220 milligrams. You ate one cup (two times as much as 1/2 cup). So you ate twice as much sodium (220 multiplied by 2), or 440 milligrams.

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**Take Action**

Check when completed	
<p><b>My SMART Goal for This Week</b>                      Do your best to reach the SMART* goal you set with your health coach. Write it here. Check the box when you have completed it.</p> <hr/> <hr/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Staying on the Path to Wellness</b>                      When you are ready, choose one or two tips above that you would like to put into action. Set a weekly SMART goal for each one. Write your goals here. Check the boxes when you have completed them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <hr/><hr/></li> <li>• <hr/><hr/></li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/>

\*SMART goals are specific, measurable, appropriate, realistic, and timely. For example, think of a high-sodium processed food you eat often or in large amounts. Set a goal to choose a lower-sodium food instead, such as: “On Saturday I will buy sliced fresh turkey instead of ham for sandwiches this week.”

SMART goals help you succeed! If you have any trouble setting your weekly SMART goals, ask your health coach for help.

The information in this tip sheet is for educational purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice.

Sources:

- “Processed foods: Where is all that salt coming from?” American Heart Association. Available at [www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/PreventionTreatmentofHighBloodPressure/Processed-Foods-Where-is-all-that-salt-coming-from\\_UCM\\_426950\\_Article.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/PreventionTreatmentofHighBloodPressure/Processed-Foods-Where-is-all-that-salt-coming-from_UCM_426950_Article.jsp). Accessed July 10, 2015.
- “Salt.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available from [www.cdc.gov/salt/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/salt/index.htm). Accessed July 10, 2015.



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