

Patient information

PATIENT INFORMATION – How to Reduce Your Salt Intake

You have been asked to reduce the amount of salt in your diet.

Salt can also be called sodium or sodium chloride. Sodium is a mineral that occurs naturally in foods or is added during manufacturing. Table salt is a combination of sodium and chloride.

Why should I reduce the salt in my diet?

Reducing the salt in your diet can help to reduce the fluid retained, known as ascites and oedema. Salty foods will also make you feel thirsty, which can make it harder to limit your fluid intake if you are on a fluid restriction.

Fluid Shifts - Ascites and Oedema

Ascites is the collection of fluid around your middle. This can cause your weight to change due to the weight of the fluid. Some people can hold up to 20kg (3 stones) of fluid in their abdomen.

Oedema is the collection of fluid in body tissues and often starts in feet, ankles and legs. This can also change your body weight.

Rapid changes in body weight can be due to fluid shifts rather than changes in muscle or fat stores. Loss of muscle and fat is often hidden by the ascites/oedema.

How much salt?

The UK Government recommends the general adult population should have no more than 6gs of salt per day. People following a low salt diet should aim to have less than this.

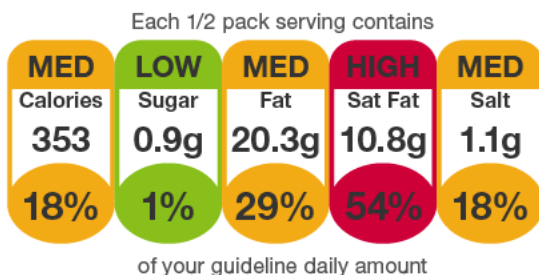
Where does salt come from in a normal diet?

- 10% of salt is naturally found in foods.
- 20% of salt is added to foods during cooking or at the table.
- 70% is present in processed or convenience foods, for example tinned foods, ready meals or savoury snacks.

Some foods are almost always high in salt because of the way they are made. Other foods, such as bread and breakfast cereals, can contribute a lot of salt to our diet. But that is not because these foods are always high in salt – it is because we eat a lot of them.

Tips for reducing the salt content of your diet

- **Avoid adding salt to your food** whether you are eating at home, cooking or eating out, do not add salt to your food automatically. Many people add salt out of habit, but it is often unnecessary and your food will taste good without it.
- **Try the alternative flavourings** suggestions are listed on the next page.
- **Swap foods high in salt for lower alternatives**, some examples are listed on the next page.
- **Look out for reduced-salt products** for example using low salt stock cubes, brown sauce, ketchup, mustard, soy sauce and gravy.
- **Avoid salt substitutes** e.g. LoSalt, Avogel, Himalayan, as these contain high amounts of potassium.
- **Check salt contents using an app.** If you have a smart phone the Change4Life Food Scanner app can scan the barcode on food packets to find out exactly how much salt it contains. You can visit www.nhs.uk/change4life/food-facts/food-labels for more details.
- **Check salt contents of foods by reading food labels.** Many food products in the UK display a 'traffic light' label to help you make a healthier choice. You'll find traffic light labels usually on the front of the pack.



Source: Food Standards Agency

This example is amber colour because the salt content is moderate

Per 100g:	Low	Moderate	High
Salt	< 0.3g	0.3 - 1.5g	>1.5g
Sodium	< 0.1g	0.1 - 0.6g	>0.6g

Loaf of white bread

Nutrition				
Typical values	100g contains	Each slice (typically 44g) contains	% RI*	RI* for an average adult
Energy	985kJ 235kcal	435kJ 105kcal	5%	8400kJ 2000kcal
Fat	1.5g	0.7g	1%	70g
of which saturates	0.3g	0.1g	1%	20g
Carbohydrate	45.5g	20.0g	2%	90g
of which sugars	3.8g	1.7g		
Fibre	2.8g	1.2g		
Protein	7.7g	3.4g		
Salt	1.0g	0.4g	7%	6g

This pack contains 16 servings

*Reference intake of an average adult (8400kJ / 2000kcal)

This bread is amber colour because it contains a moderate amount of salt

Food Ideas

	Minimise	Choose Instead
MEAT	Tongue, beef burgers, corned beef, luncheon meat, salami, tinned meat, pate, ham, sausages	Beef, lamb, pork, chicken, turkey.
FISH	Tinned fish in brine, smoked fish or shellfish e.g. kippers, yellow haddock, cockles, prawns	Tinned fish in oil or water, fish fingers, white fish e.g. plaice, cod, haddock.
SPREADS	Fish and meat pastes, pâté, sandwich spreads, peanut butter	Jam, marmalade, cream cheese, margarines and low fat spread.
SEASONINGS	Stock cubes, Oxo, Bovril, Marmite, Worcester sauce, soy sauces, sauce mixes.	Bisto gravy, pepper, olive oil, herbs and spices, lemon juice. Limit sauces e.g. ketchup, brown sauce (use 1-2 teaspoons per portion)
CHEESES	Cheese spreads, feta, processed cheese slices, Danish blue & Roquefort	Cream cheese, cottage cheese. No more than 50g/2oz per week of other cheese e.g. cheddar, edam, stilton, brie.
SNACKS	Salty savoury biscuits e.g. Ritz, Tuc, cheddars Salted or flavoured crisps and nuts, salted popcorn. Olives	Cream crackers, matzo, rich tea biscuits, water biscuits, "Salt n Shake" crisps without salt, unsalted nuts, plain popcorn, fruit, yoghurt, vegetable sticks
MISCELLANEOUS	Ready prepared meals e.g. meat pies, pasties, pizzas, ready-made soup, baked beans, take away, instant noodles	Home-made pies or pasties, reduced salt baked beans, home-made soup.

Suggestions for flavouring foods

- Potatoes - Mint leaves, parsley, bay leaf, chives, chopped spring onion, dill or garlic.
- Rice - Bay leaf, nutmeg, coriander, cardamom, peppercorns or turmeric.
- Roast Meat - All spices
- Pork - cloves, apples, pineapple, mustard
- Lamb - rosemary, marjoram, apricots, mint sauce/jelly
- Chicken - tarragon, paprika, dill, grapes
- Fish - Lemon, parsley, all spices, bay leaf, cayenne pepper, dill, fennel
- Eggs - Black pepper, oregano, mixed herbs, chives, garlic
- Vegetables - Parsley, garlic, black pepper, coriander, basil, mixed herbs

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