

Tip Sheet

Eat without salt? Are you Crazy??

Getting to the "Heart" of health care costs-

How you can keep your heart healthy and contribute to solving the national debt due to less hospitalizations for heart failure



Dr. Barbara Riegel

- Salt is made up of sodium and chloride; sodium makes us hold fluid.
- Current average daily intake of sodium in the U.S. is more than 3,400 milligrams (about 1½ teaspoons of salt).
- A low-sodium diet includes no more than 2,000 to 3,000 mg of sodium daily (2-3 grams)
 - 1 tsp of salt is about 2,300 mg of sodium
- Sodium is a natural ingredient in food, added to food, and found in some medicines (some antibiotics, fizzing drugs).
- Find sodium by reading labels
 - What is the serving size?
 - What is the sodium in each serving?
 - If you eat a larger serving you are eating more sodium than specified on the label.
- Look for "soda" and "sodium" on food labels (e.g. baking soda).

Ways to limit salt and still enjoy life.

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- Stop adding salt to your food
- Experiment with low- or no-salt herbs, spices, seasoning mixes
- Use low-sodium ingredients (no canned soups, cheeses)
- Rinse canned foods (e.g. beans)
- Avoid processed and junk foods
- Pick foods naturally low in sodium
 - Fresh foods (preservatives are high in sodium)
 - Canned fruits
 - Plain frozen vegetables
 - Dried beans, peas, rice, lentils (not cooked with salt)
- Ask for low sodium foods when you eat out or visit someone
 - Pick restaurants that offer fresh food choices
 - Be specific about what you want, how you want it prepared
 - Ask for dressing or sauce on the side
 - Limit your use of condiments high in sodium (steak sauce, ketchup, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce)
 - Avoid dishes named "au gratin, Parmesan, hashed, Newberg, casserole, Devonshire..." – they are high in sodium
 - Avoid "good for your heart" food options (low in fat, high in sodium)
 - Ask the waiter! Ask your family member preparing the food!

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- Decrease your sodium intake before and after a party to compensate for hidden salt
- Make changes slowly
- For a few days or weeks, track the amount of sodium you eat daily until you get used to judging high sodium foods.

Self Care is the Key!

Notes for Discussion with Your Treatment Team

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