

## Nutrition and Dietetics

### How to eat less salt

Too much salt in your diet can cause problems such as water retention and high blood pressure. This can increase your risk of:

- stroke
- heart disease
- vascular dementia
- kidney problems

It's recommended adults eat no more than 6g of salt (one level teaspoon) per day.

Reducing your salt intake can make you feel less thirsty and dehydrated and have less headaches.

#### Three steps to help you cut down on salt

1. Reduce the amount of salt you add to food
2. Eat salty foods less often
3. Check food labels so you can buy foods with less salt

#### Reduce the amount of salt you add to food

If you add salt to your food:

- use less salt when cooking or avoid adding it at all if possible - over time, your taste buds will adapt to less salt
- taste your food to check if it needs salt before salting it



## Patient Information

### **‘Salt-free’ flavour boosters**

Instead of using salt, try adding flavour to your food with the salt-free flavour booster ideas

#### **Pepper**

- Add pepper to any savoury dish for added heat and flavour.

#### **Basil**

- Instead of salting tomatoes, flavour them with fresh basil and some balsamic vinegar.

#### **Rosemary**

- Add rosemary to chicken, lamb or vegetables before roasting.

#### **Bouquet garni or bay leaves**

- Use a bouquet garni or bay leaves in stocks, soups and stews.

#### **Vinegars**

- Make a dressing with balsamic vinegar, olive oil and dried thyme to use when roasting chicken and vegetables in a tray bake.
- Balsamic glaze can be drizzled over salads and pasta dishes.

#### **Garlic**

- Use fresh garlic cloves, not garlic salt.
- Use garlic in meat dishes, pasta sauces and salad dressings.
- Roast garlic whole in skins with potato wedges for extra flavour.

#### **Ginger**

- Ginger combines well with garlic for double the flavour.
- A classic Chinese flavour combination is ginger, garlic and onions with a splash of sesame oil.

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### **Mint**

- Make your own classic mint sauce with fresh mint and malt vinegar.
- Use half malt, half balsamic vinegar for a twist and add to your lamb dishes.
- Chop fresh mint with other herbs such as parsley & coriander to boost the flavour of rice or couscous salads.
- Mash fresh chopped mint into garden peas with some fresh yogurt or crème fraiche.
- Add fresh chopped mint to boiled potatoes or vegetables when serving.

### **Parsley**

- Parsley is great added to soups, stew and fish dishes.

### **Lemon or lime juice**

- Squeeze over fish and chicken dishes.
- Place squeezed lemons inside a chicken with chopped onions before roasting for a juicy roast.
- Lime juice can be really useful in Asian, Thai and Mexican cooking.

The following spices make food hot. Patients on a fluid restriction need to beware that they may make you thirsty:

### **Curry powder, turmeric, cumin, coriander, garam masala, paprika**

- Use in chilli con carne, curries and north African cooking to produce a variety of flavours and colour

### **Chillies, chilli powder, crushed chillies, smoked paprika and cayenne pepper**

- Use to make chilli con carne, spicy pasta dishes, curries and goulash

## Eat salty foods less often

Cut down on	Use lower salt alternatives
<p>Tinned, smoked and processed meats such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• bacon, gammon, sausage</li><li>• beef burgers, tongue, corned beef</li><li>• luncheon meat, ham, pate</li><li>• salami, chorizo</li><li>• pies, pasties</li></ul>	<p>Use fresh or frozen meat like beef, lamb, pork and poultry.</p> <p>When choosing cold meats, try cold roast pork, chicken, beef or turkey.</p>
<p>Smoked fish such as kippers and smoked haddock. Tinned fish in brine.</p> <p><b>* Avoid ready-to-eat smoked or cured fish products such as smoked salmon; including in sushi and gravlax if you at high risk of becoming seriously ill from a bacteria infection called Listeriosis. See page 8 for more information</b></p>	<p>Use fresh, frozen or fish tinned in water or oil.</p>
<p>Hard and processed cheese such as Cheddar, Cheshire and cheese spreads.</p> <p>Any dishes containing a lot of cheese sauce.</p>	<p>Cream cheese, ricotta, mozzarella, cottage cheese.</p>
<p>Tinned and packet soups.</p>	<p>Try homemade soup with a small amount of reduced salt stock cube.</p>
<p>Cup-a-soup and 'pot snacks'.</p>	<p>Couscous or noodles with leftover meat or fish and salad can be an alternative to a pot snack.</p>
<p>Sauces and condiments such as ketchup, brown sauce,</p>	<p>Use small amounts, infrequently, as they all contain salt.</p>

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<b>Cut down on</b>	<b>Use lower salt alternatives</b>
mayonnaise, salad cream and pickles	
Cook-in sauces and stir fry sauces	Use tinned tomatoes with herbs (fresh or dried) and garlic to make pasta sauces. Try cream or wine based sauces and flavour with pepper and herbs.
Stock cubes, ready-mixed dry seasonings and rubs, yeast or meat extracts	Homemade stock is easy to make and very low in salt if no additional salt is added.  Salt free stock cubes are now available in supermarkets*.  For gravy, use small amounts of gravy granules or Bisto powder.
Soy or fish sauce and miso paste	Use reduced salt soy and smaller amounts of fish sauce.
Salted savoury snacks e.g. salted nuts, crisps,	Unsalted nuts, unsalted crisps e.g. Tyrells naked crisps, supermarkets own crisps with salt sachet removed,
Salted biscuits e.g. Tuc, Cheddars, Bombay mix.	Plain bread sticks, unsalted popcorn, rice cakes, water biscuits, matzo crackers, melba toast

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<b>Cut down on</b>	<b>Use lower salt alternatives</b>
Take-away meals such as pizza (especially with ham or pepperoni), Chinese, curry or burger style fast food & eating out	Margarita or vegetable pizza, jacket potato with tuna or cottage cheese, unsalted fish & chips.  If possible, ask for food to be cooked without salt or mono-sodium glutamate being added.
Breakfast cereals with more than 0.6g salt per 100g: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• corn flakes</li><li>• bran flakes</li><li>• All-Bran</li><li>• Rice Krispies</li></ul>	Shredded wheat (most varieties), porridge, muesli, Ready Brek, and puffed wheat.  Moderate salt varieties such as Weetabix Weetabix minis, some whole grain 'hoop' cereals and brands of oat flakes.
Breads and baked goods with more than 1.1g salt per 100g or more than 0.4g salt per slice.	Try making your own bread and reduce the amount of salt in the recipe.

### **If you're on a low potassium diet**

Reduced salt products may contain potassium chloride. Check the food label.

### **Check food labels when shopping**

Reading food labels will help you to select a food or brand of food that is the lowest in salt.

### Traffic light system (front of pack food labelling)

The government's recommended "traffic light" system helps people to understand at a glance if the food has high (red) , medium (amber) or low (green) amounts of

- fat
- saturated fat
- sugars and
- salt

<b>Colour code</b>	<b>Salt content</b>
Green	Low - eat freely
Amber	Medium - try to limit
Red	High - eat occasionally

### Nutrition labels on the back or side of packaging

If you read the food labels in more detail, the following table can be used as a guide

<b>What is a lot of salt?</b>	<b>What is a little salt?</b>
1.5g or more per 100g	0.3g salt or less per 100g

### Other tips

- A main meal should contain less than 2g salt.
- Decrease the number of processed and takeaway foods you eat.
- Try to have homemade food where possible. Or check food labels to choose lower salt options.
- Salt flakes, rock salt, sea salt, pink Himalayan salt, black salt, garlic salt and vegetable salt are still forms of salt. Avoid these where possible.

### **Avoid salt substitutes**

Salt substitutes still contain a high amount of salt. They do not help you get used to having small amounts of salt in your diet. We do not recommend using salt substitutes.

Salt substitutes can be dangerous to people with kidney disease as they contain potassium.

### **Avoid eating ready-to-eat, cold smoked and cured fish**

To avoid listeriosis, avoid eating ready-to-eat, cold smoked and cured fish if you:

- are pregnant
- have a condition that weakens your immune systems, such as cancer, diabetes, liver disease or kidney disease
- you take medicines or have treatments that weaken your immune system, such as chemotherapy or steroid tablets

Find out how you can avoid listeriosis and reduce risks of infection:

[NHS – Listeriosis](#)

[Food Standards Agency - Listeriosis](#)

### **Useful resources**

[www.actiononsalt.org.uk](http://www.actiononsalt.org.uk)

[www.bda.uk.com/resource/salt](http://www.bda.uk.com/resource/salt)

[www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)

[www.bihsoc.org](http://www.bihsoc.org)

[www.bloodpressureuk.org](http://www.bloodpressureuk.org)

[www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/cut-down-salt](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/cut-down-salt)

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## Patient Information

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