

What's the Right Amount Of Sodium For My Health?

You are what you eat? Perhaps. Your overall eating pattern can affect your chances of getting high blood pressure.

Our bodies need salt or chemically know as sodium chloride but too much of it can be harmful. Most of us use more salt than we need. Using less sodium is important to keeping blood pressure in a normal range. Most people living in the United States consume between 3,000-5,000 mg sodium per day. The recommended sodium limit is 2,300 mg per day. Once you know you are eating about 2,300 mg per day, then aim for an even lower level of 1,500 mg of sodium per day for further reduction in blood pressure.

In the 1990's, American researchers found that the Dietary Approaches To Stop Hypertension (DASH) study showed that a diet high in vegetables & fruits as well as low-fat dairy foods and low in total and saturated fat can reduce blood pressure **significantly**.





What are the healthy blood pressure levels for adults?

Category	Systolic (mmHg)	Diastolic (mmHg)	Result
Normal	Less than 120	Less than 80	In-Range!
Pre-Hypertension	120-129	Less than 80	elevated blood pressure

Hypertension	130-130	80-89	Stage 1 - High Blood Pressure. See your primary care provider to start a conversation about non-pharmacological modification or who can refer you to a Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist.
Hypertension	140 or higher	90 or higher	Stage 2 - High blood pressure. See your primary care provider to see what total approach can work to control it.

What does the DASH Eating Plan look like based on a 2000 calorie per day diet?

Food Group	Daily Servings	Serving Sizes
Vegetables 	4-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 cup raw leafy greens (e.g. spinach, kale, lettuce) - ½ cup cooked vegetables - 4 ounces of vegetable juice

Fruits	4-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 medium fruit - ½ cup fresh or frozen fruit - 4 ounces of 100% fruit juice - ¼ cup dried fruit
Grains and Grain Products	6-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 slice of whole-grain bread - 1 ounce of dry cereal - ½ cup of cooked oatmeal, pasta, or rice
Fish, Poultry, and Lean Meat	2-3	3 ounces of cooked fish, poultry, or lean meat
1% Low-Fat or Fat-Free Dairy Foods	2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1- 8 ounces milk (choose 100% lactose-free if you are lactose-intolerant) - 1 cup yogurt or greek yogurt
Nuts, Seeds, and Beans/Legumes 	4-5 per week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -2 tablespoons peanut butter - 1½ ounce or 1/3 cup of nuts - 1 tablespoon or ½ ounce of seeds - ½ cup cooked beans

Practical Tips To Reducing Salt

- Use herbs, spices, and salt-free seasoning blends in cooking and at mealtimes.
- Know the words that indicate a high salt content: smoked, cured, pickled, soy sauce, and broth.
- Eat only fresh or frozen vegetables. Also look for canned vegetables labeled “low-sodium” or “no salt added”.
- Rinse away canned vegetables, beans, salmon, and tuna to remove some sodium.
- Do not use the salt shaker.
- Aim for a gradual decline in your salt intake which will help your taste buds will readily accept the change.

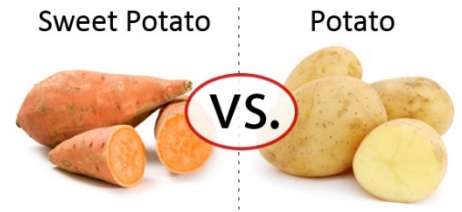
Compare Nutrition Fact Labels On Foods

- “Sodium-Free” means that there is less 5 mg per serving.
- “Low Sodium” means that there is less than 140 mg of sodium per serving or less than 140 mg *per four (4) ounce serving of a meal or main dish*
- “Reduced Sodium” and “Less Sodium” means that the food contains at least 25% less sodium compared to the appropriate reference food.
- “Light in Sodium” means there us 50% less than the regular version.
- Swirl canned vegetables in water and drain to remove about 1/3 of sodium that is listed on the food label.

Foods Beneficial For Blood Pressure:

Beets! Glorious Beets! – One cup of beets contains 400-500 mg of potassium in it! *The DASH Eating Plan also had study participants aim for 4,700 mg potassium per day.* We know that boosting your potassium intake is also important to lowering your blood pressure.

Other high potassium foods are: carrots, bananas, peaches, tomatoes, cantaloupe, prunes, oranges, dates, avocados, sweet potatoes and regular potatoes with SKIN, spinach, skim or 1% milk, flounder, sardines, lentils, split peas, kidney & lima beans, butternut squash, peanuts, and pumpkin.



Tea- small but significant decreases in blood pressure were seen in from brewed black, green, and hibiscus (Jamaican Flower) tea. Consider getting the fluids you need to drink with unsweetened hot or iced tea as alternative to pure water. Studies saw the most effect with 4-6 cups of tea per day.

Spice Up Your Life- Use herbs and spices for cooking and at mealtimes to enhance the taste of your food without salt. There are SO MANY spices and herbs to consider: basil, black pepper, cinnamon, chili powder, cloves, dill, ginger, nutmeg, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, thyme, and white pepper. Try a new spice every month!

