



What does sodium do?

Sodium is a mineral that your body uses in many ways.

- Sodium keeps a balance of water in our cells.
- Sodium transmits nerve signals throughout the body.
- Sodium regulates your blood pressure.

How much sodium is needed daily?

- Healthy adults need only 500 milligrams of sodium per day. How much is that? That equals about 1/4 teaspoon of salt per day, including salt found naturally in foods as well as added to foods.
- Most Americans consume between 4,000–6,000 milligrams of sodium daily, most in the form of salt.

How much sodium is too much?

- If you are a healthy adult who does not have high blood pressure you should limit your sodium intake to 2,300 milligrams daily.

Ways of reducing your sodium intake:

- First you must read food labels. Look at how much the label tells you a serving is and then how much sodium is listed on the label for that one serving. Keep in mind, if you eat more than one serving, you are increasing your intake.
- Most recipes don't need salt so start by cutting the amount of salt in half and then omit altogether. You can substitute herbs and spices for salt. It will take time to appreciate the flavors and for your taste buds to adjust, but you can do it!
- Keep the saltshaker in your cabinet and off the table. Keeping salt out of reach makes it easier to reduce the amount you're using.
- Taste your foods first. Many people, out of habit, add salt before tasting food.
- Add herbs and spices within 1 hour of serving for the most flavor.
- Shop for unprocessed foods. Remember, ready to eat or processed foods usually contain added salt. If you buy processed foods, look for low sodium versions. Keep in mind some low sodium versions of foods, like soy sauce, are still very high in sodium. Use these products sparingly.

