

# Too Much Salt in Your Diet Can Contribute to High Blood Pressure

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Most Canadians eat more than double the recommended daily amount of sodium. Limiting your intake of salt and other sources of dietary sodium can benefit your health, especially if you are over 45 years old or of African descent.

Did you know that with the amount of salt in the today's diet, 9 out of 10 Canadians will develop high blood pressure?

Reducing your salt intake may help lower your blood pressure. High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart attack, heart failure, stroke, and kidney disease.

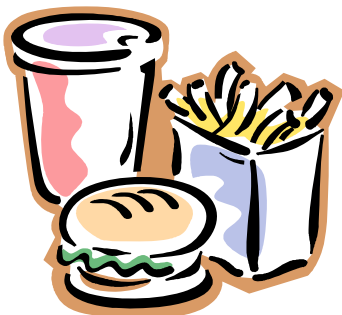
## Guidelines for Sodium Intake:

- The Canadian Government has developed sodium recommendations based on age-specific requirements. See the table below.

Age	Recommended Daily Sodium Intake (mg)
9 – 50 years	1,500
50 – 70 years	1,300
> 70 years	1,200

- The 2006 Canadian Hypertension Education Program recommends that our sodium intake should be restricted to:
  - 2,400 mg to reduce the risk of high blood pressure
  - 1,500 – 2,400 mg to manage diagnosed high blood pressure

## Sources of Sodium:



### Where is most of the sodium in your diet?

Restaurant and processed foods contribute 77% of the sodium in our diet. Sodium is added to both change the taste of food and to preserve it.

Did you know that a typical fast food burger contains approximately 1,000 mg of sodium? Add a large order of french fries and this amount increases to about 1,500 mg. From this meal alone, you will eat all of the recommended daily amount of sodium for blood pressure control.

### **Where is the rest of the sodium in your diet?**

11% occurs naturally in foods and 12% is added at the table or in cooking.

### **Tips to Help Lower your Sodium Intake:**

There are many small changes you can make in your food choices that will help lower your sodium intake.

- Eat fresh foods more often
- Limit restaurant and processed foods
- Cut down on salt at the table and in cooking. Instead, use herbs and spices to flavour your foods
- Use only small amounts of condiments such as ketchup, mustard, soy sauce, gravies and salad dressings that are high in salt
- Reduce pickled foods, olives, salsa, and dips
- Read food labels and buy brands with the lower mg of sodium per serving



### **Read Nutrition Fact Labels for Sodium:**

One of the most important ways to reduce your sodium intake is to learn to understand Nutrition Fact Labels.

### **What information is found on Nutrition Fact Labels?**

The total amount of sodium in milligrams (mg) and the % Daily Value based on a specific serving size.

## What does the % Daily Value mean?

The % Daily Value tells you whether there is a little or a lot of sodium in a food item.

## Guidelines to help you make lower sodium food choices:

- ✓ If the % Daily Value is 5 or less, the food is considered low in sodium.
- ✗ If the % Daily Value is higher than 20, the food is considered high in sodium.

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1 burger (130 g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 200	
Fat 9 g	14 %
Saturated Fat 2 g + Trans Fat 1 g	15 %
Cholesterol 70 mg	
Sodium 800 mg	33 %
Carbohydrate 4 g	1 %
Fibre 0 g	0 %
Sugars 0 g	
Protein 25 g	
Vitamin A 0 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium 4 %	Iron 2 %

## Adjusting to a Low Salt Diet:

You can adapt to a less salty taste in your food by gradually introducing lower sodium food choices into your diet. Over time, you will develop a preference for foods with less salt. In fact, you will find that some foods such as processed or restaurant foods taste too salty.

## For More Information on Eating a Low Salt Diet:

- Calgary Health Region – Eating to Lower Your Blood Pressure.  
<http://yourhealth.calgaryhealthregion.ca/Printable.jsp?GUID={0EC19D94-86C1-4B2C-A0FA-A989C870F498}>
- Canadian Health Network.  
<http://www.canadian-health-network.ca>
- Dial-A-Dietitian – Nutrition for High Blood Pressure  
<http://www.dialadietitian.org/resources/handouts/low-na-25.htm>
- Dietitians of Canada – Frequently Asked Questions and Fact Sheets  
<http://www.dietitians.ca>

To stay healthy, have your blood pressure measured regularly. For more information on high blood pressure try [www.hypertension.ca](http://www.hypertension.ca) in the public section.