



World Salt Awareness Week 2010 is 'Salt and Your Health'

The focus of World Salt Awareness Week 2010 is 'Salt and Your Health'. Many people are aware that sodium can damage their health, but do not know it is linked to serious health conditions such as stroke and heart failure. There is overwhelming evidence that eating the current high levels of sodium causes high blood pressure, the major cause of stroke and a major factor in heart disease, responsible for more than 60% of strokes, and almost half of all heart disease [^{Ref.1}], the leading causes of death worldwide.

There is also increasing evidence supporting links between our current high sodium diets and the onset of stomach cancer, osteoporosis, obesity and kidney stones and kidney disease, the research has been steadily growing, and now is too compelling to be ignored (^{Ref.2}).

- a) "Many people think eating too much sodium will not affect them and that they do not need to cut down how much they eat. It is important for everyone in Canada to reduce the amount of sodium in their diet by making simple changes in preparing their food; try to read the product labels and choose the lower sodium options; also try using lower sodium ingredients and not adding sodium during cooking or at the table, and avoid salty meals when eating."
- b) "The food industry is largely responsible for the high current sodium intake in our country, as approximately 75-80% of the sodium we eat is hidden in everyday foods such as bread, meat products, breakfast cereals and other processed foods making it hard for us to cut our intake. It is imperative that the manufacturers take out the unnecessary sodium from their food products immediately if we are to reduce our sodium intake."

Professor Graham MacGregor, Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry, and Chairman of WASH comments, "The unnecessarily high amount of sodium we eat leads to stroke and heart disease, and there is increasing evidence that sodium intake is linked to stomach cancer, osteoporosis, obesity and kidney

stones and kidney disease. We should all reduce our sodium intake if we are to minimise the risk of developing these serious health problems.”

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- For more information on sodium and health, please visit www.lowersodium.ca www.worldactiononsalt.com

Ref 1: World Health Report 2002: Reducing risks, promoting healthy life. World Health Organisation, 2002.

Ref 2: Factsheets containing the supporting evidence for each condition can be found at http://www.worldactiononsalt.com/awareness/world_salt_awareness_week_2010/index_saw10.htm