



Sodium Quiz

**How much do you know about sodium and your health?
Take the quiz and discover if you're sodium savvy!**

Answer True or False to these statements

1. Reducing your intake of salt or sodium may help you prevent high blood pressure. **True | False**

2. You may be at greater risk of developing hypertension from high dietary sodium if you are over 45 years old. **True | False**

3. Most of the sodium consumed by Canadians is from salt added at the table. **True | False**

4. Adults should aim to eat less than 2,000 mg of sodium a day. **True | False**

5. The Nutrition Facts label tells you the number of milligrams (mg) of sodium in the whole package of food. **True | False**

6. "Instant" packaged foods and fast food restaurant meals generally have a very high sodium content. **True | False**

7. Food has no flavour without salt. **True | False**

8. You can tell what foods are high in salt because they taste salty. **True | False**

9. If I cut down on salt my body won't have enough. **True | False**

10. To lower blood pressure...Eating a low sodium, well balanced diet can be as effective as taking a blood pressure medication. **True | False**

11. I would know if I have high blood pressure. **True | False**

12. Gourmet or sea salt is better for you than table salt. **True | False**

13. Following a low-sodium diet could reduce the risk of heart attack or stroke by up to 25-30%. **True | False**

14. Most Canadian children and youth have sodium intakes that are too high. **True | False**

15. ½ cup of tomato juice contains 40 times more sodium than one fresh tomato. **True | False**

16. My blood pressure is good so I don't have to worry about my sodium intake. **True | False**

1. Reducing your intake of salt or sodium may help you prevent high blood pressure. TRUE

A recent study estimated that reducing salt intake could reduce the number of Canadians with high blood pressure by almost 1 in 3. About 1 million Canadians who currently have hypertension would have normal blood pressure if the diets of Canadians had a healthy amount of sodium !

2. You may be at greater risk of developing hypertension from high dietary sodium if you are over 45 years old..... TRUE

The older we are, the more likely it is that a high sodium intake will raise our blood pressure. Similarly, the older we are, the more likely it is that restricting our salt intake will help lower our blood pressure. Other people at greater risk from high dietary sodium are those of African descent or who have diabetes, hypertension, kidney or heart disease.

3. Most of the sodium consumed by Canadians is from salt added at the table. FALSE

For the average Canadian, the overwhelming majority (77%) of salt we consume is added by food producers (manufacturers and restaurants). Only 11 % is added directly in the home, and only 12% comes naturally from the food itself. To reduce your salt intake, it is a good idea to stop adding salt to your food. But because so much of our salt intake may come from food producers, it is also essential to keep an eye on the “Nutrition Facts” labels on food packages and select the items in your diet with care. Best choices are foods with 120mg (or 5% of the daily value) sodium or less per serving size. See www.hypertension.ca for more information

4. Adults should aim to eat less than 2,000 mg of sodium a day. TRUE

2300 mg sodium is the recommended Upper Limit for daily sodium consumption in adult Canadians, and less is better. In fact, 2,000 mg is considered to be an adequate level of sodium intake for normal body functions in Canadians from 19 to 50 years of age.

The 2014 Canadian Hypertension Education Program (CHEP) recommends: To decrease blood pressure, consider reducing sodium intake towards 2,000 mg (5g of salt or 87mmol of sodium) per day .

5. The Nutrition Facts label tells you the number of milligrams (mg) of sodium in the whole package of food “Instant“ packaged foods and fast food restaurant meals generally have a very high sodium content. FALSE

Serving sizes (1/2 a cup, 1/6th slice of pizza, etc) are often much smaller than the whole package of food. The Nutrition Facts label reports the number of milligrams of sodium in a serving of food, as well as what percentage of your maximum daily intake of sodium this represents (“% Daily Value”). For sodium, higher is not better. The higher the % Daily Value, the more sodium is in the food. Keep in mind that we often consume far more than the suggested serving size. Best choices are foods with 120mg (or 5% of the daily value) sodium or less per serving size.

6. “Instant“ packaged foods and fast food restaurant meals generally have a very high sodium content. TRUE

The vast majority (77%) of the sodium we eat is added by food processors and restaurants. Even a single serving of some take out foods can approach or exceed our recommended daily maximum level of sodium intake. Ask your restaurant, cafeteria or take-out counter to provide information on the sodium content of their products. To keep sodium intake down, eat fresh produce, check Nutrition Fact labels on food packaging, and select foods and menu items with care. Best choices are foods with 120mg (or 5% of the daily value) sodium or less per serving size.

7. Food has no flavour without salt. FALSE

A high salt intake masks the natural flavour of foods. Add flavour to foods with herbs and spices. Taste buds adapt quickly to a lower salt intake.

8. You can tell what foods are high in salt because they taste salty. FALSE

Many processed foods have a high salt content without tasting salty (e.g. breads, sauces, cheese). If you usually have a high salt intake, it will become « normal » to you. You will not notice the salty taste. After a few weeks on a lower salt intake, your taste buds will become more sensitive to salty foods.

9. If I cut down on salt my body won't have enough. FALSE

Humans do not need much sodium for health. The Adequate Intake level (1500mg/day) is sufficient for almost all adult Canadians. It is only in unusual circumstances (e.g. sustained high intensity exercise with profuse sweating) that sodium requirements are increased.

10. To lower blood pressure... Eating a low sodium, well balanced diet is as effective as taking a blood pressure medication. TRUE for some Canadians

Always check with your healthcare professional. A DASH diet rich in vegetables and fruit, lower fat milk products and lower fat meat and alternatives, as described in Canada's Food Guide, along with lower sodium food choices is the best dietary approach to a healthy blood pressure. Daily physical activity is also an important factor so keep moving ! 1800 mg reduction results in a 5mmHg reduction in BP, equivalent to one BP medication.

11. I would know if I have high blood pressure. FALSE

High blood pressure is often called the "silent killer" because many people are unaware they have it. Get your blood pressure checked regularly. Normal Blood Pressure: 140/90

12. Gourmet or sea salt is better for you than table salt. FALSE

Sodium chloride is the major component of all « salts ». The chemical name for salt is sodium chloride, the major source of sodium in our diet.

13. Following a low-sodium diet could reduce the risk of heart attack or stroke by up to 25-30%. TRUE

Reducing salt intake can significantly reduce strokes , heart attacks, and other cardiovascular disease. In a recent study, people who made an effort to moderately reduced their sodium intake were followed up after 10 to 15 years. They were found to have a 25-30% reduction in cardiovascular "events" such as stroke and heart attacks.

Ref: Cook Nancy R. et al, Long term effects of dietary sodium reduction on cardiovascular disease outcomes: observational follow-up of the trials of hypertension prevention (TOHP). BMJ, 2007, 334:885

14. Most Canadian children and youth consume too much sodium in their diets. TRUE

A recent Canadian nutrition survey shows that over 80% of children and youth have dietary sodium intakes that are above the Upper Limit for health. The Upper Limit for 1-3 yr olds is 1,500mg, for 4-8 yr olds it is 1,900mg; for 9-13 yr olds it 2,200mg and for 14 and over it is 2,300mg of sodium per day.

15. ½ cup of tomato juice contains 40 times more sodium than one fresh tomato. TRUE

One tomato has 11 mg of sodium. ½ cup of tomato juice contains 465 mg of sodium. A lot of salt is add during food processing.

16. My blood pressure is good so I don't have to worry about my sodium intake. FALSE

Blood pressure usually increases with age so nearly everyone should be concerned. We know that sodium intake is directly related to blood pressure. Reducing sodium intake to prevent high blood pressure is important for everyone adults and children.

How well did you do?

10-16 Answers Correct

Congratulations!
You're Sodium Savvy!

5-10 Answers Correct

Good job!
Keep reading those nutrition labels.

0-5 Answers Correct

Oh oh! Please visit
www.hypertension.ca

A slide deck is available to address the quiz in a group setting
<http://www.hypertension.ca/en/professional/resources>