

Hidden Salt and Your Health

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Too much sodium increases the risk of developing high blood pressure, also known as hypertension, heart disease or stroke, kidney disease or diabetes.

HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

1 teaspoon or 2300 mg of common table salt is the upper accepted limit of sodium that is considered healthy. Canadians on average are consuming 1.5 teaspoons or 3400 mg every day.

HOW MUCH SODIUM IS RECOMMENDED?

The amount of sodium you should consume daily depends on how old you are. For children under the age of 1 salt should not be added to food. Below you can find the right amount of sodium recommended for different age groups based on Health Canada's recommendations.

Age	Recommended daily intake of sodium	Maximum intake of sodium
1-3 years	1000 mg	1500 mg
4-8 years	1200 mg	1900 mg
9-13 years	1500 mg	2200 mg
14-50 years	1500 mg	2300 mg
51-70 years	1300 mg	2300 mg
71+ years	1200 mg	2300 mg

WHERE IS THE SALT?

You should be careful about the amount of salt that you use in cooking and at the table, but this is only a small part of salt in the average Canadian diet.

If you have any questions about sodium or anything you've learned from this document, the OMA recommends that you speak with your doctor for further details.

SOURCE: Government of Canada - <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/nutrients/sodium/sodium-basics.html>

Know Where the Hidden Salt Is

A large portion of the salt that we consume comes from processed food products. These are the packaged and canned foods, as well as prepared meats and frozen meals, found in the grocery store.

Read the Nutrition Facts Label

To get a real sense of the salt that you consume, it is essential that you pay attention to the nutrition facts label on the side of food packages, where salt content is labelled as sodium. The Nutrition Facts label identifies how many milligrams of sodium each serving of product contains, and also what percentage of your recommended daily maximum intake this represents. Note that the serving size on the nutrition facts label may be significantly less than the amount you are planning to eat.

PASS ON THE SALT

Table salt is about 40% sodium. This is the same "sodium" that is listed in the Nutrition Facts labels on the side of food packages. It is easy to keep track of the salt that you add to the food you are preparing, but harder to keep track of all the hidden sodium in pre-prepared or packaged foods. In fact, 77% of sodium consumed by Canadians comes from processed foods. Here is a list of common processed and pre-packaged foods that may be high in sodium:

- Cold cuts and cured meats
- Soups
- Pasta dishes (i.e. lasagna or pasta salad)
- Savoury snacks (i.e. chips, popcorn, pretzels)
- Pizza
- Sandwiches
- Breads and rolls

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