Limit Sodium

CHALLENGE
Shake the salt habit to protect your heart

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Limit Sodium."
2. Create a plan for meals and snacks to eat less sodium.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

When Miki Sudo steps on stage this month at Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest on Coney Island in New York, she's going to be hungry … for hot dogs. And in case you didn't know, hot dogs are one of many foods high in sodium.

Sudo is a competitive eater. She's munched her way through a mountain of high-calorie, high-sodium foods. She's devoured a massive pile of chicken wings: 178 of them! And she's last year's Hot Dog Eating champ.

What's on your menu? You're probably not going to eat anything like Sudo. But foods like hamburgers, hot dogs, pizza, and fried chicken are all high in sodium. And that's a problem if you eat foods like this a lot.

On the Fourth of July, Sudo will try to munch her way through dozens of hot dogs and buns in under 10 minutes. And she'll down about 19,000 mg of sodium. Sounds crazy, right?

You may not eat 178 chicken wings or 40 hot dogs at a time. But you may still eat too much sodium. Most people eat 3,400 mg of sodium per day or more. And that's enough to raise your risk for a heart attack, stroke, and other health problems.[1]

Want to learn how to eat less sodium to protect your heart and your health? Take the month-long Health Challenge to *Limit Sodium*.

How much do you know about the health benefits of reducing sodium/salt in your diet? Take this quiz to find out.

|	T	F	
1.	☐	☐	Too much sodium in your diet can increase blood pressure and the risk for heart disease and stroke.
2.	☐	☐	You can lower your blood pressure in just a few days, by reducing the amount of sodium in your diet.
3.	☐	☐	You need some sodium in your diet to help control blood pressure, absorb nutrients from food, and support nerve and muscle function.
4.	☐	☐	The average adult should consume less than 1,500 mg of sodium/salt per day.
5.	☐	☐	Canned soups, microwave meals, and breads do not contain high levels of sodium.

How did you do? The average adult should consume less than 1,500 mg of sodium per day. But most people eat twice that amount by eating things like fried foods, microwave meals, pizza, processed food, and processed meats. The good news: Eating more plant-based foods will help protect your heart and keep your blood pressure under control.

Answers: 1. True. 2. True. 3. False. 4. True. 5. False.

Why eat less salt?

A couple slices of pizza. A fast food burger with fries. Canned soup, microwave meals, and processed meats. What's the big deal? These foods are all high in sodium.

Most adults should eat 1,500 mg of sodium per day or less, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.[2] But people consume 3,400 mg of sodium or more per day. And that's a problem.

Find out how much sodium you consume tinyurl.com/yyys2ngz
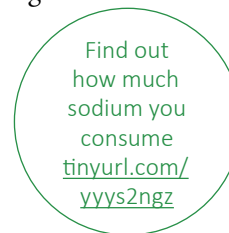
EAT LESS SODIUM:
Simple Ways to Improve Your Diet

Eat less than 1,500 mg of sodium per day. If you're going to follow this nutrition guideline to protect your heart and your health, here are a few things you can do.

- ☐ **Read food labels.** Read the Nutrition Facts label on the food packages. Check the sodium content. Choose foods that have less than 100 mg of sodium per serving. Limit frozen dinners, pizza, packaged mixes, canned soups, and salad dressings.

- ☐ **Buy fresh or frozen.** When it comes to fruits and vegetables, fresh or frozen is best. Canned and processed foods typically contain higher levels of sodium. If you do buy canned foods, always rinse before preparing to remove excess sodium.

- ☐ **Avoid or limit fast food.** Many fast food chains serve burgers or fried foods that contain more than 1,000 mg of sodium in a single serving. Look up the nutritional information of menu items before you order.

- ☐ **Go lean.** If you eat meat, eat fresh poultry, fish, and lean meat rather than canned, smoked, or processed meats.

- ☐ **Make your own breakfast.** Instead of ordering breakfast on the go, make time to eat your morning meal at home. Choose low-sodium cereals or oatmeal. Enjoy fresh fruit or Greek yogurt.

- ☐ **Season with spices.** Skip the salt shaker. Season foods with herbs, spices, lemon, lime, vinegar, or salt-free seasoning blends. Or use a salt substitute.

- ☐ **Choose low-salt snacks.** Instead of pretzels and potato chips, try healthy snacks like unsalted nuts, dried fruit, low-fat or fat-free yogurt, plain popcorn, or fresh fruits and vegetables.

Top 25 foods that add the most sodium to your diet tinyurl.com/yxrfunj7

Follow the DASH Diet to eat less sodium tinyurl.com/dc87g

Four reasons to eat less sodium:

1. High blood pressure

What's your blood pressure? Less than 120/80 is normal. If it's higher than that, it's elevated, high, or a hypertensive crisis. About 1 in 3 adults has elevated or high blood pressure. It's a condition that forces the heart to work harder to circulate blood throughout the body. Over time, high blood pressure can damage your heart and arteries, lead to plaque build-up, and cause a heart attack or stroke.[3]

2. Kidney disease

Eating too much sodium can cause high blood pressure. Over time, high blood pressure can damage the small blood vessels in the kidneys. This increases the risk for kidney stones. It can also make you very tired and short of breath. Your body may retain water, and you might pee a lot.[4]

3. Poor bone health

If you consume high levels of sodium, your risk for poor bone health goes up. Too much sodium in your diet can limit the amount of calcium your bones absorb. And that can make them weaker and more prone to injury.[5]

4. Eye disease

High blood pressure and a diet with too much sodium can damage the small blood vessels in the eyes. This condition limits the amount of oxygen your eyes receive. And it can lead to vision loss.[6]

Where's the sodium?

Only a small amount of sodium occurs naturally in foods. Most is added during processing. Compare these foods:

	Green Beans	
1 cup, canned 354 mg		1 cup, fresh 1 mg
	Peas	
1 cup, canned 428 mg		1 cup, frozen 8 mg
	Corn	
1 cup, canned 571 mg		1 ear, corn cob 3 mg

References

1. He, F.J., et al. (2007). Blood pressure is the most important cause of death and disability in the world. *European Heart Journal Supplements*, 9:23-28. From: https://tinyurl.com/yy3trv6o
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). Get the facts: Sodium and the dietary guidelines. From: https://tinyurl.com/ycmphmxp
3. Stamler, J. et al. (2018). Relation of dietary sodium (salt) to blood pressure and its possible modulation by other dietary factors. *Hypertension*, 71(4): 631-637. From: https://tinyurl.com/y4see97d
4. Arcand, J., et al. (2017). More evidence that salt increases blood pressure and risk of kidney disease from the Science of Salt: A regularly updated systematic review of salt and health outcomes (April–July 2016). *Journal of Clinical Hypertension*, 19:813-823. From: https://tinyurl.com/y4lnyvw9
5. Ye, Z., et al. (2017). Association between essential hypertension and bone mineral density: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Oncotarget*, 8(40): 68916-68927. From: https://tinyurl.com/y3wjcmgh
6. American Heart Association. (2017). How high blood pressure can lead to vision loss. From: https://tinyurl.com/yybpaoxa

Calvo's SelectCare HEALTH PLANS

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Shake the salt habit to protect your heart

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or by your house keys).
2. Create a plan for meals and snacks to eat less sodium.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to eat less sodium.
4. At the end of the month, total the number of days you take action to eat less sodium. You must do this on at least 22 days this month to complete this challenge. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:				HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes			
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary
HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	
HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	
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HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	HC ex. min._____	

_____ Number of days this month I took action to eat less sodium

_____ Number of days this month I was physically active for at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

_____

_____

Name _____ Date _____