

## Minimizing Salt in Your Diet

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Did you know that the average American eats about 4000 mg. of sodium (salt) every day? The healthy amount is between 1500 mg to 2300mg per day. So how can you reduce your intake of salt and why would you want to?

The intake of salt is one of the causes of high blood pressure. Therefore, if you know you have high blood pressure you can do a number of things. You must check your food labels. Canned foods usually have a high salt content. You should also watch how many "processed" foods you eat, like bologna, sausage, and bacon. You may also have to limit the times you eat out, especially in Chinese, Italian, Indian, Thai, and Mexican restaurants. Also, try to taste your food before salting it; some people just automatically salt their food before eating it, when it may not need added salt.

If it is difficult for you to cut down your salt intake, you may want to consider following the DASH diet. DASH stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. This is a diet high in fruits and vegetables and low in fat.

Type of food	Number of servings for 1600 - 3100 Calorie diets	Servings on a 2000 Calorie diet
Grains and grain products (include at least 3 whole grain foods each day)	6 - 12	7 - 8
Fruits	4 - 6	4 - 5
Vegetables	4 - 6	4 - 5
Low fat or non fat dairy foods	2 - 4	2 - 3
Lean meats, fish, poultry	1.5 - 2.5	2 or less
Nuts, seeds, and legumes	3 - 6 per week	4 - 5 per week
Fats and sweets	2 - 4	limited

Fruits and vegetables contain potassium, which help keep a person's blood pressure lower by helping the kidneys excrete (pass) more salt. Experts recommend 4,700 mg. of potassium per day; usually if you eat 8 - 10 servings of fruits and vegetables per day that should be enough. Foods high in potassium include: potatoes, 940 mg., sweet potatoes, 540 mg., bananas, 490 mg, salmon 3 oz. cooked 390 mg., almonds, 20 nuts, 210 mg. So, increase your intake of potassium and decrease you intake of salt and you should see your blood pressure change for the better.

Take care of yourselves and each other as the Lord has commanded us.