



Cook with Less Salt and More Flavor

The average American eats about 2,900 to 4,300 milligrams of sodium each day. The American Heart Association recommends that if you are healthy, you should aim to eat less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium each day. For the most benefit, your goal should be even lower. Some people (middle-aged and older adults, people with high blood pressure, etc.) need less than 1,500 milligrams each day.

Your food choices make a big difference in your sodium intake. Compare the two sample diets listed below. They show how much of a difference you can make in how sodium adds up by choosing foods carefully. Refer to the following page for heart-healthy techniques to spice up home-cooked dishes without adding salt.

High-sodium diet

Breakfast	Sodium (mg)
4 ounces tomato juice	327
¾ cup wheat flake cereal	207
8 ounces fat-free milk	103
2 slices bacon	147
2 slice whole-wheat bread	296
2 teaspoons light margarine	60
6 ounces coffee	4
Total breakfast sodium	1,144
Lunch	
Sodium (mg)	
1 cup canned vegetable soup	890
2 slices white sandwich bread	270
2 ounces corned beef	761
1 teaspoon mustard	56
1 medium dill pickle	833
10 potato chips	90
Total lunch sodium	2,900
Dinner	
Sodium (mg)	
4 ounces baked ham	1,369
½ cup green peas, canned	214
½ cup scalloped potatoes	410
1 biscuit	305
2 teaspoons light margarine	60
1 cup spinach salad	19
2 tablespoons French dressing	261
½ cup instant pudding	418
Total dinner sodium	3,056
Total sodium (all meals)	7,100

Low-sodium diet

Breakfast	Sodium (mg)
½ medium grapefruit	0
¾ cup wheat cereal	trace
8 ounces fat-free milk	103
2 slices whole-wheat bread	296
2 teaspoons light margarine	60
1 tablespoon jelly	0
6 ounces coffee	4
Total breakfast sodium	463
Lunch	
Sodium (mg)	
½ cup fruit cup	10
2 slices whole-wheat bread	296
2 ounce roasted chicken breast	42
2 teaspoon low-fat mayonnaise	93
½ medium tomato	4
½ medium cucumber	0
4 vanilla wafers	60
Total lunch sodium	505
Dinner	
Sodium (mg)	
4 ounces halibut, baked	78
½ cup broccoli	19
2 medium boiled potatoes	11
2 slice Italian bread	234
1 tablespoon light margarine	90
1 cup chopped iceberg lettuce	6
½ cup sherbet	35
Total dinner sodium	473
Total sodium (all meals)	1,441

Use these heart-healthy techniques to spice up your home-cooked dishes without salt.

- Fill a salt shaker with a combination of fresh herbs and spices to use in place of salt.
- Buy fresh herbs when possible; they provide more flavor than dried. Chop and add the herbs at the last minute for a fresher taste.
- Use dry mustard or low-sodium mustard. You can also try honey mustard, which is very low in sodium. Check the labels when new products appear; some are low in sodium without saying so on the front.
- For a little zing, add fresh hot chile peppers to your dishes. Raw peppers are very low in sodium and have a lot more flavor than the pickled kind.
- Sprinkle vinegar or citrus juice on foods just before eating. Vinegar is wonderful on dishes such as spinach. Try citrus juice on fruits such as cantaloupe.
- Grind garlic, chiles, and fresh herbs and spices with a mortar and pestle to release their flavors.

Source: American Heart Association



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<http://www.americanheart.org>.**