

American Stroke Month and National High Blood Pressure Education Month—May 2011

High blood pressure, which can be caused by a diet high in salt (sodium), is a major cause of heart disease and stroke.

- About 77 percent of salt comes from processed foods and foods eaten outside the home.
- Most of the salt in your diet comes from foods that might not even taste salty, such as breads, meats and dairy products.
- Many restaurant meals provide more than a whole day's worth of sodium, while thousands of packaged foods provide one-fourth or more of a day's maximum recommended intake.
 - For example, one serving-size package of Ramen Noodles contains more than 1,400 milligrams (mg) of sodium and a typical frozen dinner can have more than 3,000 mg of sodium.



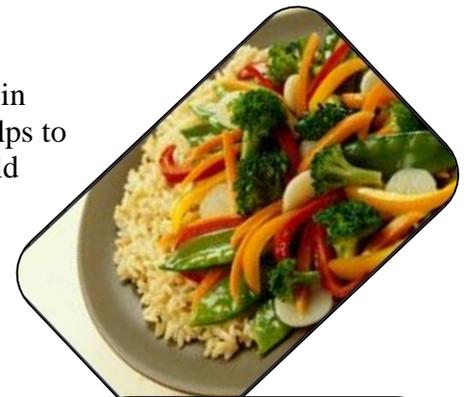
How much salt do we need?

We all need a small amount of sodium to keep our bodies working properly. The recommended 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans are:

- Less than 2,300 mg per day.
- 1,500 mg of sodium per day if you are 51 and older, or at any age if you are African American or have hypertension, diabetes or chronic kidney disease.

Why should we eat less salt (sodium)?

Even if you do not have high blood pressure, the lower your blood pressure is, in general, the lower your risk of heart attack and stroke. Cutting down on salt helps to prevent and control high blood pressure. By decreasing sodium intake, we could prevent 400,000 deaths each year.



What can you do to reduce your risk for stroke?

To reduce your risk for heart disease and stroke:

- Know your recommended limit for daily sodium intake.
- Choose foods like fresh fruits and vegetables. Fresh food usually has less salt than canned or processed food.
- Read the nutrition label of the foods you purchase. Be sure to check serving size and number of servings per container. Also, compare the amount of sodium in different brands.
- Ask for foods with no or low salt at restaurants. You can always add salt to taste.
- Ask for a copy of nutritional information at restaurants. Some restaurants, especially chain restaurants can provide this information. You can find it online, often, as well!



See Page 2 for more information!

Related Health Resources

National Stroke Association

<http://www.stroke.org>

The National Stroke Association (NSA) provides nonprofit services, including educational programs and community-based activities in prevention, treatment and rehabilitation to stroke-affected families and individuals.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Division of Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/DHDSP>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention provides public health leadership to improve cardiovascular health for all, reduce the burden and eliminate disparities associated with heart disease and stroke.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest

<http://www.cspinet.org/index.html>

The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) informs the American public about nutrition, food safety, health and other issues. CSPI seeks to educate the public and advocate for government policies that are consistent with scientific evidence on health and environmental issues.

The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov>

The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) provide information for professionals and the general public about heart and vascular disease and lung and blood disorders.

The U.S Department of Agriculture

<http://www.mypyramid.gov>

The U.S. Department of Agriculture features information on the new food pyramid—you can get a personalized plan. The Web site also includes online tools and dietary guidelines.

