

Make 1,500 milligrams your daily sodium budget

A high-sodium diet can raise your risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke. The government says we should limit sodium to 2,300 milligrams, and that people at high risk of health problems from salt should make 1,500 milligrams their limit. Who's at high risk? Nearly 70 percent of U.S. adults! The high-risk group includes people who are over age 40, people who have high blood pressure or slightly elevated blood pressure, people who have diabetes, and African Americans. If we get used to eating high-salt diets in childhood, it can be harder to cut back later on.

That's why it's a smart choice for everyone to make 1,500 milligrams their daily sodium budget.

Here are two meals from the same restaurant. The numbers show the milligrams of sodium. Add it up: One meal is moderate in sodium. The other has gone way over the daily sodium budget.

Moderate sodium meal

Salad, oil & vinegar
95

Lemon basil salmon
370

Whole grain brown rice
85

Total

 **550 mg**

37 % of your daily sodium budget

Maxed out-sodium meal

Salad & balsamic vinaigrette
625

Chicken Milanese
1120

Rice pilaf
340

Total

 **2085 mg**

139 % of your daily sodium budget

1. Get fresh: Most processed foods are high in sodium. Choose fresh foods and season them with herbs, spices, and citrus—not salt.

2. Scan the label: Look for canned, boxed, frozen, and prepared foods with less than 300 milligrams of sodium per serving.

3. Downsize your portions: A good rule of thumb is that the more calories a meal has, the more sodium it has. So skip the supersize. Share a dish and you can cut your salt by half.

4. Seek low-salt options when dining out: Check restaurant websites for sodium info. Ask the server for dishes that use salt sparingly. Use a light hand on salty condiments.

5. Call for action: Food makers and restaurants listen to consumers. If more people ask them to slash the salt, they will. Call, e-mail, text, or just ask to speak to the chef.

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**ways to
cut back
on salt**

See more ways to choose wisely and slash the salt 

Choose processed food wisely and you can slash the salt

The Nutrition Facts label lists how much sodium is in one serving of food. Compare different brands of processed food. You may be surprised to see that there is quite a bit of difference in sodium levels. Some products use up a sizable chunk of your 1,500 milligram daily sodium budget. Others leave plenty to spare. Here are some examples.

Bread	Serving size	Sodium (mg)	How much of your daily sodium budget?
Wonder Stoneground 100% Whole Wheat Bread	2 slices	400	27%
Pepperidge Farm 100% Natural Soft 100% Whole Wheat Bread	2 slices	260	17%

Cheese	Serving size	Sodium (mg)	How much of your daily sodium budget?
Kraft Velveeta Cheese	1 ounce	410	27%
Cabot Cheddar	1 ounce	180	12%

Pizza	Serving size	Sodium (mg)	How much of your daily sodium budget?
Kashi Mushroom Trio and Spinach Pizza	1/3 pizza	660	44%
Amy's Single Serving Spinach Pizza – Light in Sodium	1 pizza	390	26%

Ham	Serving size	Sodium (mg)	How much of your daily sodium budget?
Oscar Mayer Deli Fresh Meats Ham – Brown Sugar, Thin Sliced	2 oz	830	55%
Healthy Ones Honey Ham	2 oz	410	27%

For more tips on cutting back on salt, visit The Nutrition Source, <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/salt>