

Controlling Sodium Consumption for Optimum Health

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SODIUM SALT & TASTE

Excess sodium salt in foodstuffs makes the cooking extra tasty. Sodium salt enhances the taste of a variety of foodstuffs, giving a good mouth feel, better fullness, giving a rounded taste sensation that makes the mouth pleasant for a considerable period after food consumption. Replacing sodium salt with an alternative ingredient is near impossible, mainly due to its unique ability to improve flavor perception of various foods. A typical example is the ability of sodium salt to offset even the acidic taste of tomato, making fresh tomato paste taste better with salt in.

SODIUM SALT ALTERNATIVES

In some foods like cheese dough, sodium salt helps in controlling microbes and eliminating herein is difficult. The closest replacement is potassium salt even though it leaves a bitter metallic after taste in our mouths. Naturally evaporated sea salt that contains a blend of sodium and potassium salts along with other trace minerals is another alternative. At 30-40% less sodium, it does not give the typical chalky metallic taste otherwise perceived in 100% potassium salt, as here potassium is part of the overall crystal structure.

SODIUM INTAKE FROM SNACKS

Surprising commercially available snacks like potato chips, popcorns, all types of farsans, etc., are largely responsible for over 40% sodium intake in humans. If manufacturers reduce the available sodium content in such products by even 25% it can prevent incidence of deaths due to sodium-induced hypertension a major risk factor from heart diseases and stroke by a large number.

CSE Findings (gm/100 gm of food)	
Items	Salt
Burger	1.9
Indian Snacks	2.5
Instant Noodles	3.7
Potato Chips	2.3
Pizza	1.0
Fried Chicken	0.9

Commercial snack manufacturers resist reducing the salt content since

it is the most crucial ingredient influencing the integrity of flavors, and product likeability, much so essential for successful business.

THE INDIAN SCENARIO

World Health Organization, medical experts believe that India will have over 5 million yearly deaths due to only coronary heart disease by 2020. National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau data reports that salt consumption in different Indian states range from less than 5 gm to 30 gm with almost 40% of families consuming 10 gm or more salt per day. Indian weather conditions leads to sodium loss due to perspiration, even then with the rising incidence of hypertension and cardiovascular diseases it is better to limit sodium salt consumption.

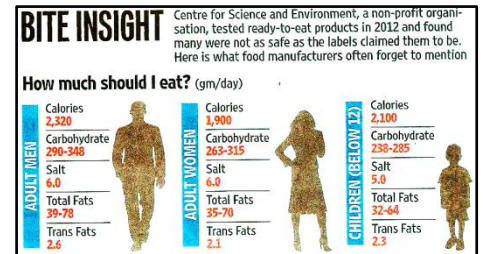
SODIUM & HEALTH

Studies show that only a 2,300 mg lower intake of sodium per day can reduce a 3 to 6 mg Hg systolic blood pressure, leading to fewer strokes, and so lesser coronary deaths. The study further state that 77% sodium comes from processed and restaurant foods, 12% come from natural foods, 6% come from table accompaniments, and only 5% comes from home cooked food. This clearly points out that consumers should read food labels in processed packed products very carefully before consuming. Label will clearly indicate the presence of MSG (Mono Sodium Glutamate), Sodium Benzoate, Disodium Phosphate, Sodium Bicarbonate (Baking Soda), etc., directly responsible for increase in sodium intake through processed foods. We can very clearly see that sodium can come even from condiments, TV foods like popcorn, pizza and burgers, even bread, butter, cheese, cookies, buttermilk, and so on, apart for our regular favorite salty snack wafers.

IS SODIUM SALT BAD FOR HEART?

Some studies show that high sodium leads to cardiovascular health problems whereas some others say that low sodium diet increases the risks of heart diseases. Ironically, doctors do not hesitate to inject saline solution to heart patients suffering from a heart attack. Apparently, there

is no clear answer! However, most doctors believe that if one is sensitive to sodium, or is already suffering from coronary heart disease, then excess sodium definitely adds to risks. In such cases, it is prudent to reduce sodium intake or avoid it completely.



PRECAUTIONS FOR CONSUMERS

Consumers should pay closer attention to packaged food product labels, and assure themselves that the product is safe before buying. Some label information will make the food look appear healthy by giving out partial information or sometime even deliberately lie and one should be fully aware to identify the same. Food label may sometime list the amount of salt, sugar, fat, etc., but will not tell of our daily requirements for healthy life. Most people are not even aware that one packet of chip contains half of our daily requirement of fat and salt intake. One bottle of cola has two times the daily requirement of sugar for adults and children. A good number food labels do not display sodium content in the food product. Awareness to correctly read the labels and looking for FSSAI or ISO approved marking on packaged food stuffs is now of paramount importance.

LIFESTYLE & GOOD HEALTH

Human body needs both sodium and chlorine. Electrolytic balance of sodium in blood serum and potassium in blood cells keeps one healthy. We need both sodium, and potassium for good health. Insufficient intake of Calcium, Magnesium, and Potassium can also affect blood pressure and our overall health. We cannot totally eliminate or decrease any one of the components from our daily requirements. Living a balanced lifestyle and eating a variety of food products to imbibe all essential ingredients and vital elements is the right choice for a healthy living.

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SALT, THE SILENT KILLER

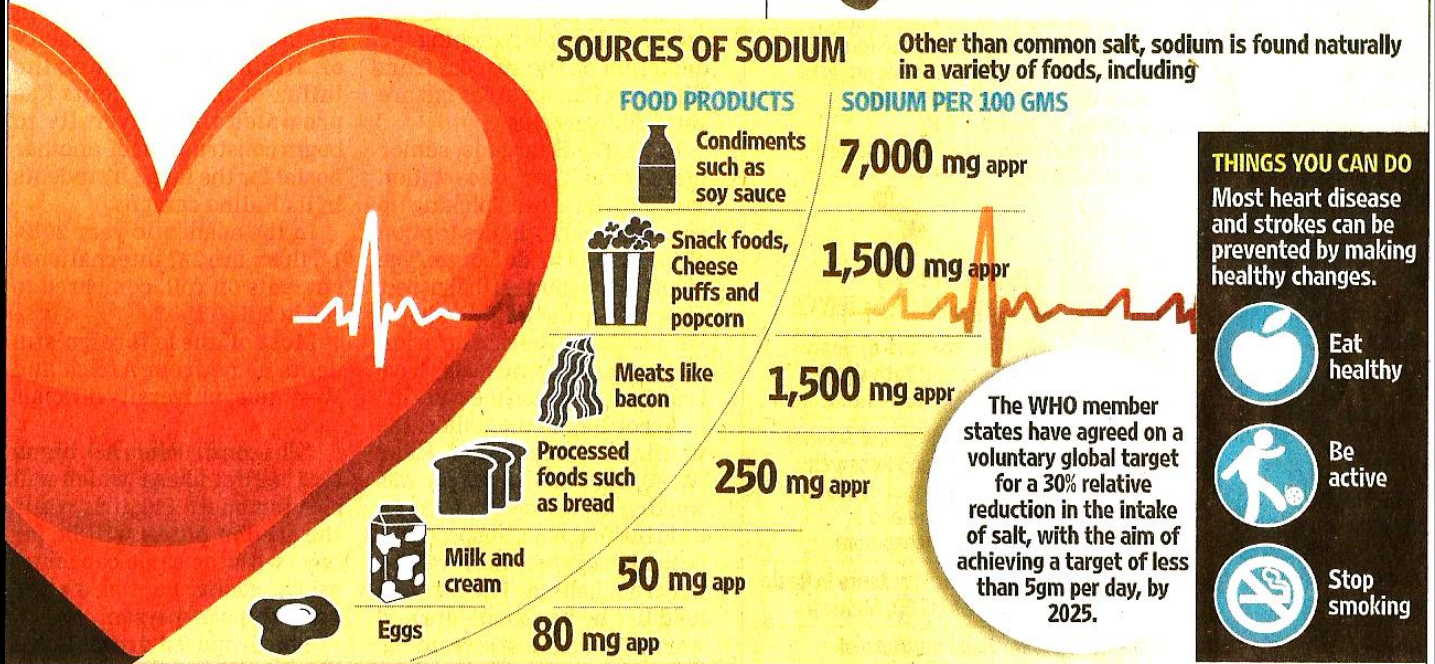


WHAT THE WHO SAYS

According to the revised guideline issued on January 31, 2013, adults should consume less than 2,000 mg of sodium, or 5 grams of salt, and at least 3,510 mg of potassium per day.



A person with elevated sodium levels or low potassium levels could be at risk of high blood pressure, which increases risk of heart disease and stroke.



HOW SALT INCREASES BLOOD PRESSURE

The amount of salt you eat has a direct effect on your blood pressure

Salt makes your body hold on to water. If you consume too much salt, the extra water stored in your body raises your blood pressure. The more salt you eat, the higher your blood pressure becomes

The higher your blood pressure, the greater the strain on your heart, arteries, kidneys and brain. This can lead to heart attacks, strokes, dementia and kidney disease.

Consuming too much salt may also mean that blood pressure medicines don't work well.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO STOP EATING THE FOODS YOU LOVE COMPLETELY

Try reducing the portion size of less healthy foods and increasing the portion size of healthy foods

Try swapping foods – if you have a sweet tooth, try a fruit instead of chocolate

EATING A HEART-HEALTHY DIET

Diets high in saturated and trans fat, sugar and salt increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.

A balanced diet rich in fruit and vegetables helps prevent heart disease and stroke.