

Making America Organic...One Home At a Time!



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Americans Should Shake Salty Food Habit

When it comes to seasoning food, there's no shortage of salt options. But when it comes to health, it doesn't matter if it was mined in Kansas, solar-evaporated from the Mediterranean Sea or hand-harvested in French marshes. Salt is salt, the experts say, and it's bad for your health. Chances are you're eating way too much of it.

If you think setting down the shaker will make a difference, take that advice with a grain of salt. Most salt comes from processed foods and restaurants.

Here's what's known. For good health, most people need less than a quarter-teaspoon a day of salt—a natural mineral known as sodium chloride. Of course, except for medically supervised diets, it's almost impossible to consume that little.

In fact, many foods exceed that amount per serving. Most Americans consume as much as 2 teaspoons of salt a day, far above the recommended half-teaspoon for healthy adults, according to the Institute of Medicine.

That's a serious problem. Though the mechanism behind it isn't fully understood, high-salt diets can cause high blood pressure, a risk factor for heart and kidney disease and stroke.

"This is the equivalent of a jumbo jet with 400 people on it crashing every day," says Dr. Stephen Havas, vice president of public health for the American Medical Association. He says if Americans cut their salt use in half, 150,000 lives a year could be saved.

Don't think that having normal blood pressure exempts you. Because blood pressure naturally rises with age, people become increasingly susceptible to salt's ill effects. Many researchers also think salt has a cumulative effect, triggering problems after years of overuse.

The good news is that much of the damage is reversible simply by cutting back on salt. The bad news?

"Reducing your salt doesn't necessarily reduce your blood pressure to normal," says Dr. Jeffrey Cutler, senior adviser at the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. "If you have hypertension, most likely you will need some medication."

So what should you do about it? Start by under-

standing the source of the salt.

Health officials aren't concerned about the dash in your pasta cooking water or the sprinkle on your scrambled eggs. Salt added at the table or during cooking accounts for less than a quarter of the sodium in the American diet.

It's processed and restaurant foods that are the problem.

For perspective, a McDonald's Quarter Pounder with Cheese contains nearly half a teaspoon of salt, while two slices of Pizza Hut Meat Lover's Stuffed Crust pizza has more than a teaspoon. Even most low-sodium canned soups contain nearly a quarter teaspoon.

And taste isn't always a good indicator. A serving of Cheerios has more salt than a serving of Ruffles potato chips.

Because processed and restaurant foods dominate the American diet, it can be hard to cut back—unless you eat out less and buy fewer processed foods.

Health officials aren't waiting for that to happen. That's why they think change hinges more on the food industry than the consumer.

"You don't have to ask people to do anything," says Dr. Norman Kaplan, a blood pressure expert at University of Texas Southwest Medical Center in Dallas, "if you could get the food processors to do it."

That's a big if.

Advocacy groups, such as the Center for Science in the Public Interest, for years have pushed the government to regulate salt, put warning labels on high-sodium foods and devise a program for gradual reductions in restaurant and processed foods. To no avail.

Salt is classified "generally recognized as safe" by the Food and Drug Administration, which says it prefers a voluntary, industry-led approach to reductions. Industry and government officials also say consumers can make healthy choices using existing nutrition labels.

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Harvest Blend Regular

- Baby Bok Choy
- Carrots
- Celery
- Green Kale
- Yellow Onions
- Zucchini
- White Mushrooms
- Hass Avocado
- Rival Apricots
- Strawberries
- Cantaloupe
- Diamond Princess Peaches
- Black Amber Plums

See the web site for details on our other options. Produce bag contents are subject to change based on availability.

OO Reminder

Now that warmer days are upon us, please remember it is your responsibility to leave a cooler outside your door if you are not home to receive the delivery.

This is especially important if you are receiving dairy with your produce.

While we have, in the past, left the thermal bags at your door, we would really prefer not to do so, as the return rate on these bags is often a problem for us.

A cooler is also better for you because ice packs in the cooler will do a better job of keeping your food fresh in the ambient temperature than our bags without any ice.

Thank you for your business, and let us know if you have any questions.

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Recently, the debate intensified. The American Medical Association in June joined the push, urging the government to require labeling of high-salt foods, and called on the processed food and restaurant industries to cut salt levels by half during the next decade.

The group also asked the government to revoke salt's status as safe.

So far, the government — which last year issued new dietary guidelines urging Americans to eat less than a teaspoon of salt, about 100 milligrams less than the previous guidelines — hasn't committed either way. Officials say they are considering the best way to examine the issue.

To its credit, the food industry has worked to find a low-sodium salt alternative — which it calls the Holy Grail of food processing — and many

companies have introduced lower-sodium products, or quietly lowered the salt in existing foods.

But salt is hard to replace. Besides enhancing other flavors, it also trains the palate, leaving unsalted foods tasting bland. As a result, low-sodium products remain a minority and most salt substitutes have disappointed.

Blame for that is shared, says Alison Kretser, nutrition director for the Grocery Manufacturers Association. She says consumers have spurned many low-sodium products and the government hasn't done enough to fund research into salt alternatives.

Of course, industry fear and reluctance have a role, too. Salty foods drive beverage sales, so many companies stand to lose from low-salt foods. Meanwhile, food processors worry that lowering the salt in their products will push consumers to competitors.

Recipes

Italian Pork Chops with Kale

- 1 bunch kale
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 large peeled clove garlic
- 4 thick pork chops
- 2 tsp fennel
- 1 cup hot water
- 1 tbsp tomato paste

Soak kale and rinse it vigorously. Simmer kale for 20 minutes with salt in large pot. While kale is cooking, heat oil in large fry pan. Add garlic and cook for 2 minutes over low heat. Add pork chops and sauté for 5 minutes on each side. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and fennel seed. Dissolve tomato paste in hot water and add. Cover and cook on low for 30 minutes. Add tomato sauce to kale. Cover and cook for another 10 minutes. Serve over mashed potatoes or rice.

Spicy African Kale and Yams

- 1 large bunch kale
- 4 cups Garnett yams, rinsed well, chopped
- 1 1/2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 cups Purple cabbage, sliced
- 1 1/2 cups Onion, chopped
- 3 tbsp soy sauce
- 2 tbsp salt, or to taste
- 1 tbsp minced garlic
- 1 tbsp ginger, peeled and minced
- 1 tsp serrano chile, seeded and diced
- hot sauce, to taste

Rinse and drain kale well. Steam kale and yams. Kale should still be colorful and yams should still have some firmness. While kale and yams are steaming, place oil in a large sauté pan and heat on medium high. Add onion, garlic, ginger and chili pepper, cook for 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Add cabbage and cook for 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Add small amounts of water if necessary to prevent sticking. Place in a large mixing bowl with remaining ingredients, add kale and mix well. Add yams and gently mix well.

Chicken Stuffed With Apricots

- 8 to 10 sm. whole chicken breasts, deboned, skin left intact
- 1/2 lb. apricots, snipped into quarters
- 1 lb. fresh spinach

- 1 1/2 cups seasoned bread crumbs
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg
- 1 med. yellow onion, chopped fine
- 1/2 cups chopped fresh parsley
- 1 or 2 eggs
- 1 cup white wine or 1 cup ginger ale

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Soak apricots in wine or ginger ale for several hours or overnight. Clean spinach; steam briefly. Drain and squeeze in clean towel. Get as dry as possible, then chop in food processor. Mix apricots, spinach, bread crumbs, onion, parsley, and spices together.

Mix with 1 or 2 eggs. Mixture should be moist enough to hold together when pressed into a small mound. Place 2 to 3 tablespoons in center of chicken breast (not skin side). "Fold" chicken around stuffing and place, skin up, in a baking dish. Repeat with remaining chicken. Line breasts up in baking pan. Bake for 1 1/2 hours. Brush with glaze during last 20 minutes.

GLAZE:

- 1/2 cups undiluted orange juice concentrate
- 1/4 cups soy sauce
- 1/4 cups honey
- 1/4 cups ginger ale

Strawberry Chicken Salad

- 1/4 cup reduced-calorie mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup plain non-fat yogurt
- 2 tbsp prepared chutney, chopped
- 1 tsp lime peel, grated
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp curry powder
- 1 tsp lime juice
- 2 cups chicken, diced and cooked
- 1 cup celery
- 1/4 cup red onion, chopped
- 1 pint strawberries, stemmed and divided
- Lettuce leaves

In a large bowl, mix mayonnaise, yogurt, chutney, lime peel, salt, curry powder and lime juice. Add chicken, celery and onion. Toss, cover and chill. Just before serving, slice strawberries. Gently toss with chicken mixture. To assemble salad, line platter or individual serving plates with lettuce. Mound chicken mixture in center.