



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Easy on the Salt

Advice and Action to Reduce Dietary Sodium Among Adults With and Without Hypertension — Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, United States, 2015

Recorded: February 20, 2018; posted: February 22, 2018

[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Kathleen Dooling] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Kathleen Dooling.

Salt not only helps flavor our food, it's necessary to keep our bodies functioning properly. But too much sodium can have negative health consequences.

Dr. Putheiry Va is with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of managing our sodium intake. Welcome to the show, Putheiry.

[Dr. Va] Hi.

[Dr. Dooling] Putheiry, what is a healthy amount of salt?

[Dr. Va] The Dietary Guideline for Americans recommend that we limit our sodium intake to less than 2300 milligrams per day. This is a little bit less than one teaspoon of salt. It is also important to note that 'sodium' and 'salt' are commonly interchangeable. But really, sodium is the mineral found in salt,

[Dr. Dooling] Are Americans consuming too much sodium?

[Dr. Va] Nine in 10 Americans consume too much sodium, meaning they consume more than 2300 milligrams per day.

[Dr. Dooling] What health problems can result from too much sodium in our diets?

[Dr. Va] When we consume too much sodium, sodium accumulates in the body and, for most people, the body holds onto water to dilute the sodium. What happens is that this increases blood volume and with increased blood volume, this stresses the heart and kidneys, as well as stresses and stiffens the blood vessels in our body. Over time, this can lead to high blood pressure. High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease, such as heart attacks and strokes.

[Dr. Dooling] What foods are particularly high in sodium?

[Dr. Va] Restaurant meals and prepackaged foods contribute to more than 70 percent of the sodium we consume daily. This includes pizza, sandwiches, and cheeseburgers. Other foods that contribute to the amount of sodium we take in daily includes bread which is moderate in sodium,

per serving, but if we consume several slices of bread per day, this can add up to more than 2300 milligrams.

[Dr. Dooling] Give our listeners some suggestions for how to eat a diet within the recommended sodium levels.

[Dr. Va] I have four recommendations. First, when shopping, read nutrition labels. Choose foods with no salt added or labeled “low in sodium.” Second, when at a restaurant, ask for salt not to be added to your food, or order lower sodium options. Third, consume more fresh foods without added salt in sauces and fewer processed foods. For instance, consume more fruits and vegetables which are naturally lower in sodium. Lastly, discuss nutrition, diet, and how you can lower sodium with your healthcare professional. They can offer individual guidance and bring in a nutritionist if necessary.

[Dr. Dooling] Where can listeners get more information about how to lower dietary sodium?

[Dr. Va] Listeners can go to cdc.gov/salt.

[Dr. Dooling] Thanks, Putheiry. I’ve been talking today with Dr. Putheiry Va about the importance of managing sodium in our diet. Experts recommend that we consume no more than 2300 milligrams of sodium per day, or a little less than a teaspoon. Always check food labels to avoid foods high in sodium. Talk with your healthcare provider about managing sodium intake to support your health.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Kathleen Dooling for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.