

Read the article.

Shake the Salt Habit!

Overloading on Sodium

The salt you use at home is a combination of two elements: sodium and chloride. These elements are beneficial in small amounts. Unfortunately, most Americans consume way too much sodium. This causes some people to retain extra fluid in their bodies and develop high blood pressure, which puts a strain on the heart.

How much sodium is healthy? The American Heart Association recommends no more than 1,500 milligrams (mg) a day. This is slightly less than $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon of table salt. However, most people consume more than twice this amount without realizing it.

Sodium Is Sneaky

The amount of salt you sprinkle on your food isn't the biggest part of the problem. That amount would be easy to control. Three-fourths of the salt we eat actually comes from two sneaky sources. The first is restaurant food. A fast-food cheeseburger can contain half a day's sodium or more. Add french fries, and your sodium intake could skyrocket!

The other main source of sneaky sodium is packaged foods. These are foods that come in packages like cans, bags, and boxes. We all know potato chips and other snack foods are salty. But many foods we think of as healthy can add a lot of sodium to our diets, too. These common foods are nicknamed the "Salty Six." They are bread and rolls; cold cuts and cured meats; pizza; soup; sandwiches; and poultry, like chicken. That's right—chicken. Some fresh chicken in supermarkets is injected with flavor solutions that can include high amounts of sodium.

Outsmarting the Sodium Sneaks

Cutting down on sodium can be done, but it takes planning. Your first line of defense? Check the Nutrition Facts labels. These labels list how many milligrams of sodium are in one serving. Compare labels and choose the product with the lowest amount of sodium. You might be surprised that different brands of the same food can have different sodium levels. Also look for the American Heart Association's Heart-Check Mark on food packages. The design will help you find foods that can be part of an overall healthy dietary pattern.

Watch Out
for
Sneaky Sodium!

Write the answers.

1. Table salt is a combination of _____ and _____.
2. How much sodium is recommended per day? _____
A. 1,000 mg B. 1,500 mg C. 2,400 mg
3. Three-fourths of the sodium people consume comes from _____
and _____.
4. What are the "Salty Six"? _____

5. How do you find out the sodium content of a packaged food? _____



(RI.5.1)
Answer Key

“Shake the Salt Habit!”

1. sodium, chloride
2. B
3. restaurant food, packaged foods
4. bread and rolls, cold cuts and cured meats, pizza, soup, sandwiches, and poultry
5. Read the Nutrition Facts label.