

Cutting Sodium From Your Diet

JUNE 15, 2010

Denver, CO — Most experts recommend 2000 mg of sodium a day - with new research this has become even lower - down to a rounded teaspoon. Keep in mind that salt is not only what comes out of the shaker, but rather what goes into the food during processing and manufacture. For instance, although you may not add salt to canned or ready-made soup, usually one serving has enough salt for the entire day in just one small bowl.

"Salt is everywhere - be smart and on the lookout! Lower salt intake might reduce the incidence of high blood pressure, stroke, or even heart attack.," said National Jewish Health Cardiologist Dr. Andrew Freeman. Dr. Freeman offers the following tips.

Vary your flavoring. Use spices without salt. Use garlic, pepper or spice preparations like Mrs. Dash. If you must use salt, consider using sea salt which is low in sodium or potassium chloride which has no sodium.

Avoid lunch meats. Almost any preserved or processed meat such as salami, bologna, ham, sausage and hot dogs are loaded with enough salt - sometimes as much as 2-3 days worth in one sitting.

Beware of cheese. Cheese and cheese spreads are often loaded with salt to make them taste good, but look carefully at the amount of sodium in your favorite cheeses.

Stay away from prepackaged meats. Prepackaged uncooked meats and chicken breasts often are "brined" in a sodium bath to help improve the flavor.

Bouillon cubes. Many people think making soup from scratch with bouillon cubes is low in sodium, but check again. Most brands cubes are loaded in salt!

Check the label. Look for sodium on the label. Sometimes it will say "low salt" on the package, but always check the sodium on the label. Also check the serving size. Manufactures are clever and may make it seem like the product has low sodium - for a very small serving size.

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