

Say *Low* to Sodium!

It's an alarming fact — one out of every three adults has high blood pressure and the median age of diagnosis is dropping!¹ Although there are several factors that contribute to high blood pressure, such as stress and genetics, the consumption of sodium and potassium can have a big impact.

Sodium is important for food preservation, keeping foods safe to eat, and we also need *some* sodium in our diet to maintain our body's fluid balance. But did you know that you only need 2300mg (or less) of sodium per day? That's the amount of sodium in about 1 teaspoon of table salt. Those with diabetes, with high blood pressure, or who are over 50 years of age should consume even less — about 1500mg per day. Most Americans consume twice this amount!

Potassium is also important in maintaining our body's fluid balance and plays a role in keeping our heart muscles healthy. Sodium and potassium work together to maintain that fluid balance. A high intake of sodium can increase your blood pressure, causing a strain on your heart, while an increased intake of potassium can help to blunt the effect of sodium, thus decreasing blood pressure.

Where Do Sodium and Potassium Come from?

Many of us think that eliminating table salt (sodium chloride) or not adding salt during cooking will lower the sodium levels in our diet. Table salt is just one source of sodium in our diet, and it is usually not the main source! Only 10% of your daily sodium intake comes from naturally-occurring sources, such as fruits and vegetables. So what is causing the increased sodium intake? Processed foods are the major contributors of sodium in our diet.

Potassium can be found in many fruits and vegetables, as well as in dairy products. Bananas, oranges, potatoes, carrots, yogurt, and milk are great sources of potassium that can easily be consumed on a daily basis. Remember that together sodium and potassium maintain your body's fluid balance.

So What Can You Do to Prevent High Blood Pressure and Have a Healthy Heart?

- Choose whole, minimally-processed foods.
- Watch your portion size.
- Read labels.
- Consume foods rich in potassium and lower in sodium.
- Replace salt with herbs and spices for increased flavor.

Reading Nutrition Labels

A product's sodium amount *must* be listed on the nutrition fact panel, but the amount of potassium in a product is not always listed. Look for these facts:

- Low sodium foods = 140mg of sodium or less per serving
- Very low sodium foods = 35mg of sodium or less per serving
- Sodium Free = 5mg of sodium or less per serving



- Reduced Sodium = at least 25% less sodium than the original food
- Light in Sodium = at least 50% less sodium than the original food
- Look for 10% or more DV (Daily Value) for Potassium.
- Include low-fat or fat-free dairy in your daily diet.
- Enjoy fruits and vegetables. Choose those naturally high in potassium and lower in sodium — such as bananas, dates, avocados, potatoes, and leafy green vegetables.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size: 1/2 cup (126 g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 25	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value *	
Total Fat: 0g	0%
Saturated Fat: 0g	0%
Polyunsaturated Fat: 0g	0%
Monounsaturated Fat: 0g	0%
Cholesterol: 0mg	0%
Sodium: 220mg	9%
Potassium: 190mg	4%
Total Carbohydrates: 4g	1%
Fiber: 1g	5%
Sugars: 3g	%
Protein: 1g	%
Vitamin A:	10%
Vitamin C:	15%
Calcium:	2%
Iron:	4%

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Total Fat: 0g	0%
Saturated Fat: 0g	0%
Polyunsaturated Fat: 0g	0%
Monounsaturated Fat: 0g	0%
Cholesterol: 0mg	0%
Sodium: 50mg	2%
Potassium: 300mg	8%
Total Carbohydrates: 6g	2%
Fiber: 2g	8%
Sugars: 4g	%
Protein: 1g	%
Vitamin A:	10%
Vitamin C:	15%
Calcium:	2%
Iron:	2%

* The Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet, so your values may change depending on your calorie needs. The values here may not be 100% accurate because the recipes have not been professionally evaluated nor have they been evaluated by the U.S. FDA.

Look for the following Keys to Better Health™ while shopping:

- Low Sodium
- Sodium Free
- Heart Health
- Whole Grain

Remember, enjoy all foods in moderation, and just say “low” to sodium!



REFERENCES

1. Statistic from CDC on high blood pressure:
<http://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/>