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GET THE FACTS: SOURCES OF SALT AND SODIUM IN YOUR DIET

So you've heard that reducing your sodium intake can help keep your blood pressure in the healthy range. This will reduce your risk for heart disease and stroke. Now what? When you're watching sodium, start by leaving the salt shaker on the shelf. More importantly, you need to know how much salt is already in many of the foods you cook and serve. Here's a guide on what to look for in the supermarket when trying to limit sodium.

KETCHUP, PASTA SAUCE, CANNED TOMATOES, SALSA

Food companies love to pair tomatoes and salt. Consider ketchup at 200mg sodium per tablespoon. Or pasta sauce at 500mg to 700mg per 1/2 cup; or canned crushed tomatoes at 250mg to 500mg per 4 ounces; or salsa at 200mg per 2-tablespoon serving.

The next time you go grocery shopping, be sure to bring your reading glasses. Low-sodium and no-salt-added tomato products are becoming more popular, but you'll have to study labels to find them. A few favorites:

Ketchup: Heinz and Hunt's no-salt-added ketchups are sweet and tangy.

Pasta sauce: There aren't that many low-sodium options for pasta sauce. Leading brands are Amy's Kitchen Organic Low-Sodium Marinara Sauce and Trader Joe's No-Salt-Added Organic Fat-Free Marinara. Francesco Rinaldi Traditional

No-Salt-Added Sauce is another real winner at 40mg sodium per serving. If you find these sauces a bit bland, add minced garlic and fresh parsley.

Chopped tomatoes: Pomi chopped tomatoes are brimming with sun-ripened flavor, plus they're salt-free and come in a reclosable box. Muir Glen Organic no-salt-added tomatoes are a close second.

Salsa: Newman's Own and Muir Glen Organic salsas contain half the sodium of Pace or Tostitos brands. If your favorite salsa is too high in sodium, dilute the salt content by adding a cupful of chopped fresh tomatoes to every cup of commercial salsa. If you want to boost flavor too, stir in a little minced jalapeño, chopped cilantro and a squeeze of lime juice.

SALAD DRESSINGS

The space devoted to salad dressings in the supermarket aisle is impressive. Many brands tout herbs, cheese, fruit flavors or fancy vinegars — but the dominant flavor in most is salt. Pay attention to the Nutrition Facts panel. Even if the brand says "light" on the label, it does not always mean light in sodium, just lower in fat and calories. The best way to control sodium is to make your own dressing.

QUICKTAKES



LIFE'S SIMPLE 7

Lifestyle choices have a huge impact on your health. The American Heart Association is promoting heart and blood vessel health by tracking seven lifestyle factors that affect heart disease and stroke. They call these "Life's Simple 7™". The key factors are:

1. Not smoking
2. Being physically active
3. Eating a healthy diet
4. Maintaining a healthy body weight
5. Controlling cholesterol
6. Controlling blood pressure
7. Managing blood sugar

Focusing on these seven behaviors can add years to your life. In this month's newsletter, we'll look at how limiting sodium is important for healthy eating and controlling blood pressure.

SOY SAUCE

If you like soy sauce, be sure to buy a low-sodium (lite) variety. But even lite soy sauce is still high in sodium. The typical lite version has 560mg/tablespoon compared with 920mg/tablespoon for regular soy sauce.

CANNED BEANS

Empty the can into a strainer and rinse under running water to remove up to 40% of the excess sodium and that "canned" flavor. Low-sodium versions of canned beans are getting easier to find.

CANNED SOUPS

They say "soup is good food" and many canned soups do offer a high level of nutrients. Yet many are high in sodium. Pay attention to the Nutrition Facts panel! Campbell's classic condensed soups can pack upwards of 800mg of sodium into a 1-cup serving. Look for Campbell's Low Sodium versions, which have less than 100mg. Health Valley No-Salt-Added or Healthy Choice soups are tasty and come in a wide range of flavors.

When buying plain chicken or vegetable broth, try to choose one that is both low-sodium and organic. It will taste richer and you won't be tempted to add extra salt.

How Much Is Too Much?

The 2015-2020 U.S. Dietary Guidelines came down hard on Americans' love of salty foods. A key recommendation advises: "Consume less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) per day of sodium. Adults with high blood pressure should further reduce intake to less than 1,500mg per day."

The average American consumes about 3,500mg sodium every day. Sodium is found all across the food supply, including mixed dishes such as burgers, sandwiches, tacos, pizza and soups. Multiple strategies should be used to reduce sodium intake to the recommended limits.

ECUADORIAN BEAN AND HOMINY SOUP

MAKES ABOUT 9 CUPS, FOR 6 SERVINGS

In South America, a proper dinner always begins with a hot soup. Hominy, black beans and lima beans add color, fiber and flavor to this satisfying recipe.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 sweet onion, chopped
- 1 large carrot, diced
- 1 green or red bell pepper, diced
- 4-5 cloves garlic, smashed
- chopped 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 6 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 15-ounce can yellow hominy, rinsed and drained
- 1 15-ounce can low-sodium black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 1/2 cups frozen baby lima beans or green peas, thawed

Optional garnishes: chopped fresh cilantro, chunky low-sodium salsa or chopped sweet pickled onions

DIRECTIONS

Takes 30 minutes

Heat olive oil in a large, heavy saucepan over medium heat. Add onions, carrots, peppers and garlic. Cook, stirring, until just tender, about 8 minutes.

Stir in cumin and cook for 1 minute. Add broth and salt. Bring the soup to a gentle boil. Cover the pan, lower the heat to medium-low and simmer for 5 minutes.

Stir in hominy, black beans and lima beans or peas. Cover and cook over medium-low heat for 10 minutes.

Ladle the soup into bowls. If desired, offer the optional garnishes on the side.

NUTRITIONAL INFO

210 Calories
4g Fat
1g Saturated fat
9g Protein
33g Carbohydrate
8g Fiber
375mg Sodium

Source: Healthy Living Kitchen
Resource:
http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HealthyEating/Sodium-and-Salt_UCM_303290_Article.jsp#.VolvGnvw7ro

