

Metabolism Associates, PC	136 Sherman Ave. New Haven, CT 06511 p: 203.787.0117
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Dietary Sodium Restriction

Sodium is an important factor in the diet and in your health. Although we require some sodium for the normal functioning of our bodies, the average American diet has much larger amounts of sodium than is necessary. In many people, this high sodium intake contributes to kidney failure, as well as heart attacks, heart failure and stroke. Most patients with chronic kidney disease, hypertension, heart failure, stroke or swelling need to limit their sodium intake.

A normal American diet contains about 5 grams (5,000 milligrams) of sodium per day. Sodium intake much higher than this is common. Although most people with high blood pressure are aware that sodium may be raising their blood pressure, there is an incorrect belief that if one is not using a salt shaker or adding salt while cooking, that this can be considered a low sodium diet. In fact, less than 10% of the average person's total sodium intake comes from the salt shaker, while over 90% is hidden in foods, most of which are prepared and/or packaged.

Reducing your sodium consumption to 2,000 milligrams a day or less is likely to bring your blood pressure under better control, which may enable your doctor to reduce or eliminate blood pressure medications. Sodium restriction at this level is also important in many patients with chronic kidney disease even if their blood pressure is well controlled, to prevent the development of hypertension, fluid overload, and worsening of renal function. For patients with swelling in the legs, heart failure or other problems with fluid overload, a sodium-restricted diet may significantly help with these problems as well.

Although a low sodium diet may seem bland and tasteless initially, it does not take long for most people to become accustomed to low sodium foods. If the low sodium diet is followed carefully, it becomes relatively easy to recognize or taste foods containing high amounts of sodium and to avoid them.

In general, foods that are high in sodium and should be avoided are processed and prepared foods such as soups, sauces, pickles, fast food, pizza, prepared meats including bacon, ham, hot dogs, sausages, deli meats, and other processed foods such as cheese, crackers, pretzels, chips, bread, and most snack foods. The list of high sodium foods is far too long to list, so the only way to be sure to avoid sodium is to read all labels on any packaged foods and to ask about sodium content in menu items whenever you eat out. A very short sample of foods and their sodium content is provided below, to emphasize the large amounts of sodium found in commonly consumed foods.

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Sodium Content in Selected Common Foods (per serving unless otherwise indicated):

<u>Item</u>	<u>Sodium (mg)</u>
McDonald's Premium Crispy Chicken Ranch BLT	1,750
McDonald's Grilled Chicken Club sandwich	1,690
Wendy's Spicy Chicken Fillet sandwich	1,470
Wendy's Big Bacon Classic	1,400
Maruchan Ramen noodle soup	1,290/serving
McDonald's Grilled Chicken sandwich	1,240
Wendy's large chili	1,170
McDonald's Quarter Pounder w/Cheese	1,150
Wendy's small chili	780
Pizza Hut Meat Lover's Pizza	750
McDonald's Chicken McNuggets	670/6 pieces
Pizza Hut Cheese Pizza	500/slice
Wendy's medium French fries	430
Pop Tarts	350/2 pastries
Oreos	290/6 cookies
Quaker Instant Oatmeal	270/serving
Pickles (Vlasic Bread & Butter chips)	170/3 chips
Peanut butter	150/2 tablespoons
Ritz Crackers	135/5 crackers
Kellogg's Nutri-Grain Cereal Bars	110/bar
Kudos	80/bar
Rice Krispies Treats	70/bar