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## The Reduced Sodium Diet

**INDICATION:** A reduced sodium diet is recommended for several medical reasons. Sodium is a mineral that is needed by the body in very small amounts. It plays a major role in the regulation of the body's water balance. Sodium, in excess, may lead to water retention, weight gain, and / or high blood pressure. If it has been determined that you have Meniere's Disease – a problem in the inner ear – a reduced sodium diet will decrease the discomfort of the disorder.

**DESCRIPTION:** In the body, water goes where the salt goes. The mechanism of the low-salt diet is that by reducing salt intake to only the level necessary for good body function, excess fluid will be eliminated automatically without and restriction of fluid taken by mouth. A person normally gets far more sodium than is needed in the daily diet. Most dietary sodium comes from sodium chloride (table salt). Salt contains 40% sodium and should therefore be limited in your diet. Your body does not need the great excess of salt that the average person takes in daily. "Saltiness" is an acquired taste – a learned preference – it must be unlearned if your diet is to be successful.

**GUIDELINES:** In addition to the salt we add to our food, there are other hidden sources of sodium which must be considered:

- Eliminate the habit of adding salt to food when cooking. Season foods with flavorings such as lemon, pepper, garlic, onion, and dried herbs.
- Remove the salt shaker from the table. Replace it with salt-free herb mixes, spices, and salt substitutes.
- Get a cookbook of low salt recipes. It can give you ideas for healthy and great-tasting meals.
- Read labels before buying any food that isn't fresh. Check the label for the milligrams of sodium in each serving. **WATCH OUT FOR CHEMICAL INGREDIENTS ADDED DURING FOOD PROCESSING:** baking powder, baking soda (sodium bicarbonate), monosodium glutamate, sodium saccharin, sodium phosphates, sodium caseinate, sodium benzoate, sodium ascorbate nitrate.
- If you buy antacid tablets, choose a brand that has no sodium.
- Certain toothpastes, mouthwashes, and medications may have sodium added. Ask your pharmacist to recommend a reduced sodium substitute.
- When you eat out, ask that your food be prepared without added salt. Be aware that "fast foods" are usually heavily salted.

## Dietary Guidelines for a Reduced Sodium Diet

	<i>Foods Allowed</i>	<i>Omitted</i>
Milk and milk products	whole, low-fat, skim, or chocolate milk, limited to two cups daily. Substitute plain or fruited yogurt. Low sodium milk as desired	cultured buttermilk, malted milk, commercially prepared chocolate drink or cocoa mixes.
Non-dairy beverages	coffee, tea, decaffeinated coffee or tea, postum, lemonade, Kool-Aid, fruit drinks	All others.
Meats and meat substitutes	Limit: five to six ounces daily—beef, lamb, fresh pork, veal, liver, chicken, turkey, or game meat prepared without salt or sodium compounds. Fresh fish or salt-free canned: tuna, salmon, or mackerel. Salt-free cooked dried peas and beans. Salt-free cheese, cottage cheese, or peanut butter Fresh eggs or egg substitutes (limit to one per day).	Canned, salted, smoked and cured meats: luncheon meats, ham, corned beef, bacon, sausage, hot dogs; meats koshered by salting.  Canned, salted, smoked, or commercially frozen fish. Shellfish: clams, crab, oysters, lobster, shrimp, scallops. Regular cheese and cottage cheese, processed cheese spreads. Regular peanut butter.
Fat	Salt-free butter or margarine; cream, non-dairy creamers, salad oil, shortening; salt-free salad dressing or mayonnaise. Limit: three teaspoons per day of salted butter or margarine; one tablespoon of regular salad dressing or mayonnaise.	All others, including bacon, salted bacon, salted nuts, packaged gravy mixes, and salt pork.
Bread	White, wheat, whole-grain or rye bread—limit: three slices daily Substitute for two slices of bread: one pan or hard roll, five squares of graham crackers, one hamburger or frankfurter bun, one English muffin, one biscuit, one corn stick, one pancake.	Regular breads or regular substitutions in excess of allowance. Salted crackers, matzo, melba toast, and crackers. Self-rising flour.
Cereals	Salt-free cooked cereals; oatmeal, cream of wheat, cream of rice, Ralston, grits. Regular dry cereals; puffed wheat, Sugar Smacks, Sugar Crisp, Frosted Mini Wheats, wheat germ, shredded wheat, Honey Smacks	Quick-cooking and instant cereals.  All others

Potato and potato substitutes	Salt-free grits, macaroni, white or sweet potatoes, noodles, rice, or spaghetti. Limit: two servings of salted potato or substitute.	Frozen potato products, dehydrated potatoes, salted potato chips, or corn chips, convenience rice and packaged products.
Vegetables	Salt-free canned vegetables or vegetable juice, fresh or frozen vegetables prepared without salt, except those on the omitted list.	Canned vegetables or vegetable juices with added salt, frozen sauerkraut. Frozen: lima beans, succotash, mixed vegetables and green peas. Pickles, olives, and pickled vegetables or relishes prepared with salt or brine.
Fruit	Fresh, canned, frozen or dried fruits (unless label states salt or sodium preservatives have been added). Fruit juices	Dried fruits prepared with salt or sodium compounds, maraschino cherries.
Soups and sauces	Salt-free soups and broths made from allowed ingredients. Salt-free bouillon cubes. Salt-free cream soups, gravies and sauces made from milk allowance; salt-free canned soups. Brown gravy prepared with bouillon cubes.	Regular canned, dried or packaged soups, broths or sauces. Regular bouillon cubes. Commercial sauces. Gravy made from salted meat drippings.
Desserts and sweets	Plain, unflavored or salt-free gelatin, sherbet or fruit ice, salt-free puddings and custards made with milk and egg allowance. Salt-free cakes, cookies or pies made with low sodium baking powder. Sugar, jam, jelly, marmalade, light molasses or syrup without sodium preservatives. Pure sugar candies: gum drops, hard candy, jelly beans, marshmallows. Home-made candies without salt, baking soda, or salted nuts. Limit: one average sized serving daily of cake, cookies, custard, fruit-flavored gelatin, ice cream, pie or pudding.	Desserts prepared with salt, regular baking powder or baking soda. Commercially prepared dessert items or mixes. Dark molasses or brown sugar; any product containing salt or sodium compounds.
Miscellaneous	Cinnamon, cloves, pepper, lemon, garlic, onion, dried herbs, vanilla.	Mustard, relish, catsup, soy sauce, pickles, olives, Worcestershire sauce, garlic salt, onion salt, celery salt, seasoned salt, Accent.

## Finding Low-salt Foods

You may think you already eat a low salt diet. However, even if you never pick up a salt shaker, you are probably eating more salt than you ever imagined. Many processed foods contain large amounts of salt to help preserve them and make them taste better. Read labels carefully before buying packaged foods, particularly canned foods. To get a better idea of the relative sodium content of some common foods, check the chart below. Use this information when you shop and when you eat out.

	mg		mg
<b>Meat Poultry and Fish</b>		<b>Dairy Products</b>	
Sirloin steak, 3 oz	53	Butter, salted, 1 Tbsp	116
Baked salmon, 3 oz	55	Milk, 1 cup	122
Chicken breast, roasted, 3 oz	64	Sour cream, 1 cup	123
Ground beef patty, 4 oz	87	Margarine, 1 Tbsp	134
Chicken leg, fried, 2.5 oz	194	Buttermilk, 1 cup	257
Tuna, canned, 3 oz	468	Cheddar cheese, 1 cup	701
Hot dog, 1	504	Cottage cheese, 1 cup	911
Salami, 2 slices	607	Parmesan cheese, 1 cup	1861
Fast Food Hamburger, 4 oz	763	<b>Snacks, Drinks, Condiments, Desserts</b>	
Corned Beef, 3 oz	802	Orange juice, 1 cup	2
Ham, canned, 3 oz	908	Peanuts, unsalted, 1 cup	22
Smoked salmon, 3 oz	1700	Chocolate fudge, 1 oz	54
<b>Soups, Vegetables and Fruit</b>		Diet cola, with saccharin, 12 oz	75
Apple, 1	0	Club soda, 12 oz	78
Banana, 1	1	Potato chips, 10	94
Mixed vegetables, frozen, 1 cup	64	Mustard, 1 Tbsp	129
Mixed vegetables, canned, 1 cup	243	Catsup, 1 Tbsp	156
Chicken noodle soup, canned, 1 cup	1106	Baked custard, 1 cup	209
Tomato sauce, canned, 1 cup	1482	Hard pretzel, Dutch style, 1	258
Sauerkraut, 1 cup	1560	Shortbread cookies, 2	300
<b>Bread and Grains</b>		Chocolate pudding, 1 cup	880
Oatmeal, cooked, without salt, 1 cup	2	Apple pie, 1 slice	476
Wheat bread, 1 slice	106	Peanuts, salted, 1 cup	626
Italian bread, 1 slice	176	Vegetable juice cocktail, 1 cup	883
Bagel, 1	245	Dill pickle, 1	928
English muffin, 1	378	Pretzel twists, 10	966

Adapted from:

The 2000 mg Sodium Diet Manual of The Methodist Hospital, Houston, Texas.

Low Salt Diet for Meniere's Disease, Brian F. McCabe, MD.

Meniere's Disease: Understanding your inner ear problem, © 1996 by Krames Communications, San Bruno, California.