

Cut Back on Salt

Monitoring your daily sodium intake can have major health benefits—including reducing your risk of a heart attack and lowering your blood pressure. The American Heart Association recommends not exceeding 1,500 milligrams of sodium each day. Sodium is hiding in many foods we eat, so Step One is to avoid adding salt while cooking. However, more than 70% of the sodium we eat comes from packaged and restaurant foods. Here are some ways to limit your salt intake:



Limit meals out.

Typical restaurant meals are high in sodium. Eat restaurant-prepared foods less often or order low-sodium food options that are steamed, baked, grilled, poached, or roasted.



Check the label.

Steer clear of high-salt ingredients like sodium chloride, monosodium glutamate, sodium bicarbonate, disodium phosphate, sodium nitrate, sodium propionate, and sodium sulfite.



Choose low-sodium varieties.

Many brands at the grocery store offer low-sodium or “no salt added” varieties of food like deli meats, canned soups, spaghetti sauce, beans, and vegetables.



Go easy on condiments.

Use half of your normal amount or select a reduced-sodium version. Ketchup, barbecue sauce, mustard, hot sauce, soy sauce, and salad dressings are loaded with sodium.