



## A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

### Say No to Excess Salt

*Prevalence of Excess Sodium Intake — United States, 2009–2012*

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*[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Hypertension is among the leading causes of heart disease and stroke and occurs in nearly one in three U.S. adults. Consuming too much salt is a major contributor to high blood pressure. Dr. Sandra Jackson is a researcher with CDC's Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of consuming a diet low in sodium. Welcome to the show, Sandra.

[Dr. Jackson] Thank You.

[Dr. Gaynes] Sandra, what is a healthy amount of sodium for us to get each day in our diet?

[Dr. Jackson] The newly released dietary guidelines for Americans recommend consuming less than 2300 milligrams per day for adults and even less than that for children under the age of fourteen.

[Dr. Gaynes] Now are Americans consuming too much sodium in their diets?

[Dr. Jackson] Yes, ninety percent of Americans are consuming too much.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the negative health effects of consuming too much sodium?

[Dr. Jackson] Too much sodium increases blood pressure which is a major risk factor for two leading causes of death; heart disease and stroke.

[Dr. Gaynes] Sandra, where does the sodium that we eat come from?

[Dr. Jackson] Sodium comes from the salt in our foods. Actually only a small percentage comes from the salt shaker and most of it comes from processed packaged foods and restaurant foods. Some sodium comes from hidden sources like bread and poultry that may not taste very salty but because we eat them so frequently, the sodium adds up.

[Dr. Gaynes] Give our listeners some ways that they can lower the sodium in their diets.

[Dr. Jackson] People can read the nutrition facts label while shopping to find lower sodium options of their favorite foods. For example, the sodium in a cup of chicken noodle soup can vary by as much as 840 milligrams per serving which is about a third of their recommended daily limit. So choosing a lower sodium version can cut a lot of sodium.

Another strategy is to consider adopting the dash eating plan which is the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension Diet. It's a simple heart healthy diet that can help lower blood pressure and meal plans and other information can be found about it online.

[Dr. Gaynes] Sandra, where can listeners get more information about a lowering the sodium they consume including the DASH Diet?

[Dr. Jackson] Listeners can go to [cdc.gov/salt](http://cdc.gov/salt).

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Sandra.

I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Sandra Jackson about the importance of consuming a low-sodium diet.

Remember, to consume less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium per day, choose foods naturally low in sodium like fresh fruits and vegetables, and check product labels to choose lower sodium versions of foods. Healthy food choices can help prevent many of the leading causes of illness and death.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.