



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

More to Consider Than the Salt Shaker

Sodium Intake: Quantities and Food Sources — United States, 2005–2006

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[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.

If you frequently eat packaged foods or eat out a lot, you may be consuming too much sodium, which can result in serious health problems.

Janelle Peralez-Gunn is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of reducing the sodium in your diet. Welcome to the show, Janelle.

[Ms. Peralez-Gunn] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Janelle, is sodium consumption a problem in the United States?

[Ms. Peralez-Gunn] Yes it is. Americans consume far more sodium than is recommended. Most of the sodium they eat is in the form of sodium chloride which is commonly known as salt.

[Dr. Gaynes] What is an acceptable amount of sodium per day?

[Ms. Peralez-Gunn] The general recommendation is to consume less than 2300 milligrams of sodium. Now, if you're an adult who is middle aged or older with hypertension or African American, those groups are recommended to consume no more than 1500 milligrams of sodium per day. In contrast, average intake is about 3400 milligrams per day.

[Dr. Gaynes] What kinds of food are especially high in sodium?

[Ms. Peralez-Gunn] Well, sodium is found all throughout our food supply, especially in processed and restaurant foods. One restaurant meal can exceed a whole day's worth of sodium. When you think about processed foods, like in the grocery store, foods that come in boxes, like rices and cereals, and foods that come in cans, like canned vegetables and beans, they can be high in sodium.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the potential health effects if we consume too much sodium?

[Ms. Peralez-Gunn] Eating too much sodium can increase blood pressure, which increases the risk for heart disease and stroke and kidney disease. Heart disease and stroke are the nation's first and third leading causes of death.

[Dr. Gaynes] How can people lower the sodium in their diet?

[Ms. Peralez-Gunn] It can be really challenging because there's so much sodium in our food supply, but there are things people can do. They can eat more fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables. They can read labels and pick products that are lower in sodium or labeled "No Added Salt." And when they're out to eat, they can ask the kitchen to hold the salt.

[Dr. Gaynes] Janelle, where can listeners get more information about developing a low-sodium diet?

[Ms. Peralez-Gunn] More information can be found at www.cdc.gov/salt.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Janelle. I've been talking today with CDC's Janelle Paralez-Gunn about the importance of a low-sodium diet.

To choose products that are lower in sodium, read nutrition labels. Focus on fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables and use salt-free products or herbs.

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 or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.