



Use MyPlate as a guide for planning meals. Make half of your plate vegetables and fruits, and make it affordable by following these tips.

Shrink Your Sodium Intake

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010 recommends a daily sodium intake of less than 2300 mg, equal to 1 teaspoon of salt, for Americans who are 2 years and older. Sodium intake should be less than 1400 mg (about 2/3 teaspoons of salt) among African Americans, people older than 51 and those with hypertension, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease.

On average Americans consume about 3400 mg of sodium or about 1 ½ teaspoons of salt daily. This is much more than the body needs.

High sodium intake is related to high blood pressure. Reducing sodium intake can help lower blood pressure. Keeping your blood pressure in a normal range can reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, and congestive heart failure.

Sodium is one of the components of salt but is also part of many processed foods, so look for both on nutrition facts labels to estimate your total sodium intake.

What you can do?

Choose fresh foods instead of pre-packaged foods when you can. About 75% of the sodium Americans consume is added to packaged and convenience foods during processing. The amount of naturally occurring sodium in fresh fruits and vegetables is low.

Search for the amount of sodium per serving. Check the Nutrition facts label. Find the amount of sodium in one serving. Look for **%Daily Value**. 5% DV is low, 20% DV or more is HIGH.

Compare products and choose foods with lower sodium levels. Compare the amount of sodium in foods like breads, soups and frozen meals. Choose the foods with lower sodium % DV values. Some packaged foods has claims that can help guide your choice. "Sodium free" or "salt free" contain less than 5 mg. sodium. "Very low sodium" foods have 35 mg of sodium or less. "Low sodium" foods have 140 mg or less. "Reduced sodium" foods have at least 25% less sodium than the plain version of the same item.

When you eat out. Talk to your server, request low-sodium options. Ask that your food be prepared without added salt.

When you prepare food at home. Use garlic, herbs and spices to season food. You can also add flavor to food by using seasoning blends that do not contain added salt – like Mrs. Dash or other salt substitutes. Cook foods (pasta, vegetables etc.) without adding salt. Drain or rinse canned foods like beans to remove added salt and sodium.

At the table. Taste the food before adding salt. Instead of keeping a salt shaker on the table where you eat, put it out of sight or in a place that's harder to reach.



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Just Say Yes to Fruits and Vegetables!!

Make a Healthy Switch



Adding more whole grains to your family's meals is a smart move. Not only do they provide the vitamins, nutrients and minerals needed to keep your family healthy and strong, but whole grains also contain dietary fiber, which may help reduce your risk of heart disease, cancer and diabetes.



The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend making half of the grains you eat whole, so use whole grains instead of a refined-grain product. Whole grains are healthier because they contain more nutrients.

How to Find Whole Grains



The quick way is to look for the whole grain stamp on the package label. (see stamp)

If there is no whole grain stamp, then look at the ingredients listing. The first ingredient should be whole grains. It's a whole grain if you see the words "whole" or "whole grain" before the grain's name.

Remember, being brown doesn't make bread whole wheat! Even if bread labels advertise "seven-grain" or "multigrain," they are not necessarily whole grain products. Finding whole-grain breads takes some label reading skills.

No matter which whole grains you prefer: barley, quinoa, oats, brown rice, or whole-grain pastas, breads, or cereals, make sure to check the ingredient list for "100-percent whole-grain." And remember, choosing whole grains with less sodium is the healthiest choice. Aim for grains with less than 140mg of sodium per serving.

Looking for Ways to Add Whole Grains to Your Meals?

- Start with breakfast. Choose oatmeal, whole grain toast or other whole-grain breakfast cereal.
- Enjoy whole grain pasta, brown rice, corn or whole wheat tortillas with lunch or breakfast.
- Experiment with different grains such as buckwheat, bulgur, millet, quinoa, sorghum, or whole rye or barley. To save time, cook extra bulgur or barley and freeze half to heat and serve later as a quick side dish.
- Add oatmeal, whole wheat bread or bread crumbs to meat loaf dishes. Enjoy whole grains as a snack! Try popcorn, 100-percent whole-wheat or rye crackers.

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