



## Common Names:

Salt, sodium, sea salt, iodized salt, table salt, kosher salt

## What is sodium?

Sodium is a mixture of sodium (40%) and chloride (60%). Sodium is an essential mineral used by the body for good health. It helps to maintain water balance in the body; and in the function of nerve impulses and muscles.

## Where do I get sodium from?

- Salt is found naturally in most foods not just foods that taste salty. One-third to one-half of the sodium in our diets comes from salt added to food.
- Table salt used in baked goods and cooking
- Processed, canned, and cured meats and foods.
- Fast foods and condiments.

## Recommended daily intake of Sodium:

- A "safe and adequate" intake for sodium is between 1,100 to 3,300 mg a day.
- A diet with no salt added after cooking and no excessively salty foods contains between 3,000 mg to 4,000 mg of sodium a day.
- If you have high blood pressure (hypertension), diabetes, kidney disease or are over age 51, eat 1,500 mg sodium (equal to 2/3 teaspoon of salt) or less a day.
- To prevent getting high blood pressure

(hypertension) eat less than 2,300 mg sodium (equal to 1 teaspoon of salt) a day.

## What happens if I get too much sodium?

- Excess sodium is emitted in the urine.
- Sodium sensitive persons unable to get rid of sodium efficiently have fluid retention.
- Fluid retention may cause high blood pressure (called hypertension).
- Uncontrolled high blood pressure may lead to heart disease, stroke and kidney disease.

## What happens if I do not get enough sodium?

- It is unlikely not to get enough sodium as it is found in many foods.
- Athletes (particularly marathon runners may need to eat more sodium containing foods to avoid low salt levels in the body.)

## Low salt levels can be caused by the following:

- Certain medications such as antidepressants and pain medications.
- Water pills (diuretics)
- Cirrhosis, congestive heart failure, severe vomiting or diarrhea, kidney failure and diseases.
- Drinking too much water during exercise
- Hormonal changes due to adrenal gland insufficiency (Addison's disease), underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism) primary polydipsia and high levels of the anti-diuretic hormone (ADH)
- The recreational drug Ecstasy