

Less Salt. More Flavor.



What is Sodium?

Sodium is an essential nutrient. It helps to regulate blood pressure and maintain fluid balance in the body. On average, Americans eat more than 3,400 milligrams of sodium each day, which is much more than the American Heart Association and other health organizations recommend.¹

Too much sodium can raise blood pressure, which is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. More than four in 10 American adults have high blood pressure and that number increases to almost six in 10 for non-Hispanic Black adults. Additionally, about one in 10 children (8-12 years) and one in eight teens (13-17 years) have elevated or high blood pressure. Reducing sodium intake has the potential to prevent hundreds of thousands of premature deaths and illnesses in the coming years.²

Sodium in the Diet

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025 recommend limiting sodium intake to no more than 2,300 mg a day. Sodium in the diet can add up quickly with more than 70% coming from packaged, prepared and restaurant foods, not necessarily just the salt shaker.³

¹ American Heart Association. "How much sodium should I eat per day?" <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/sodium/how-much-sodium-should-i-eat-per-day>

² U.S. Food & Drug Administration. Sodium Reduction. Published October 13, 2021. <https://www.fda.gov/food/cfsan-constituent-updates/fda-issues-sodium-reduction-final-guidance>

³ American Heart Association. "How much sodium should I eat per day?" <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/sodium/how-much-sodium-should-i-eat-per-day>

⁴ Ellis, E. 2021. "The facts on sodium and high blood pressure." Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. <https://www.eatright.org/health/health-conditions/cardiovascular-health-heart-disease-hypertension/the-facts-on-sodium-and-high-blood-pressure>

Shop & Cook Smarter

There are plenty of simple ways you can reduce sodium intake both at the grocery store and in your kitchen:

- **Choose low sodium** packaged foods.⁴
- **Include beans, peas and more plant-based** sources of protein.
- **Limit cured foods**, including cold cuts and sausages.
- **Rinse canned foods** or look for no-salt added varieties.
- **Get more natural sources of potassium** in your diet by including additional servings of fruits and vegetables.

AMOUNT OF SODIUM IN EVERYDAY FOODS

Two slices, commercially prepared white bread
(50 g) 244 mg

One ham and cheese stuffed frozen sandwich
(127 g) 490 mg

One 1 oz. bag plain, salted potato chips
(28 g) 148 mg

Breakfast bar, corn flake crust with fruit
(37 g) 125 mg

Half-cup canned, condensed chicken noodle soup
(125 g) 844 mg



RESEARCH

Mushrooms and Umami



Umami is the fifth basic taste after sweet, salty, bitter and sour. Derived from the Japanese word “umami,” meaning “delicious,” umami (pronounced oo-MAH-mee) is described as a savory, brothy, rich or meaty taste sensation. To scientists, umami indicates a high level of glutamate, an amino acid and building block of protein. To chefs and food lovers, it’s a satisfying sense of deep, complete flavor, balancing savory flavors and full-bodied taste with distinctive qualities of aroma and mouthfeel. Foods like mushrooms, tomatoes, Parmesan cheese and green tea are rich in umami.



Cooking With Mushrooms to Lower Sodium

A 2014 study from the Culinary Institute of America and University of California-Davis, published in the Journal of Food Science, explored the flavor-enhancing properties of mushrooms and found that blending finely chopped mushrooms with ground meat enhances flavor and nutrition. As the study shows, a traditional ground meat recipe prepared with 50% mushrooms and 50% meat or even 80% mushrooms and 20% meat can:

- Reduce calorie, fat and sodium intake, while adding B vitamins riboflavin (28%), niacin (20%) and pantothenic acid (27%).³
- Enhance the overall flavor because of doubling the impact of umami.
- Maintain flavor while reducing sodium intake by 25%.⁴

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Tips for Cooking Mushrooms to Enhance Flavor

The 2014 Journal of Food Science study demonstrated that cooking methods have an effect on the flavor profile of white mushrooms.

- **Sear mushrooms** for a more intense roasted, charred and smoky flavor and overall aroma.
- **Roast mushrooms** to get more sweet, salty and umami tastes with caramelized, nutty and buttery flavors.

When cooked properly, mushrooms can take on the texture and consistency of meat. For the best Blend™ results, mushrooms should be chopped to match the consistency of the meat they’re pairing with.

- **One-pan cooking** is great for tacos, Sloppy Joes and pasta sauces. Brown meat in a pan until cooked through, remove and set aside. Then, add chopped mushrooms to the same pan, sauté and return meat to the pan to complete the recipe.
- **Create a mushroom base**, ideal for burgers, meatballs and meatloaf. Roast or sauté mushrooms ahead of time to intensify flavor and then finely chop to add to ground meat dishes.