



JANUARY 31, 2024

About Sodium and Health

KEY POINTS

- Your body needs a small amount of sodium to work properly, but too much sodium is bad for your health.
- While sodium has many forms, most sodium we consume is from salt.
- Most Americans consume too much sodium.
- Most sodium comes from processed and restaurant foods.



Health risks

Eating too much sodium can increase your blood pressure and your risk for heart disease and stroke. Together, heart disease and stroke kill more Americans each year than any other cause.

Keep Reading:

[Tips for Reducing Sodium Intake](#)

Most people eat too much sodium

Your body needs a small amount of sodium to work properly, but too much sodium is bad for your health. Americans consume more than 3,300 milligrams (mg) of sodium per day, on average. This is well above the [federal recommendation](#) of less than 2,300 mg of sodium daily for teens and adults as part of a healthy eating pattern.

Sodium in everyday foods adds up

Sodium is found in foods from almost all food categories. Some of the top sources of sodium for U.S. adults and children ages 1 and older include:

- Sandwiches.
- Rice, pasta, and other grain-based dishes.
- Starchy and non-starchy vegetables.
- Meat, poultry, and seafood dishes.
- Pizza.
- Soups.
- Chips, crackers, and savory snacks.
- Desserts and sweet snacks.
- Condiments and gravies.
- Cold cuts and cured meats.
- Breads and tortillas.

Source: [Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025](#)  

Sodium or salt?

Salt and sodium are not the same. Salt is sodium chloride which is table salt. Sodium chloride is 40% sodium and 60% chloride. One teaspoon of table salt contains about 2,400 mg of sodium.

Sodium is a mineral found in many ingredients in common foods:

- Monosodium glutamate (MSG).
- Sodium bicarbonate (baking soda).
- Sodium nitrate (a preservative).

Resources

[Reading the Nutrition Facts Label](#)

[Sodium Reduction Resources for Health Professionals](#)

SOURCES

CONTENT SOURCE:
[National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion \(NCCDPHP\)](#)