



# Cut down on salt

It's important for you  
and your family



TASTE FOOD AS  
IT SHOULD TASTE

TAKE CONTROL LOWER BLOOD PRESSURE

BEATING HEART DISEASE TOGETHER

## Introduction

What you eat can have a real effect on your heart health. Many people think about the fat that's in the foods they eat, but did you know that eating too much salt could put your health at risk?

Eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure, and having high blood pressure increases your risk of developing coronary heart disease. So to help keep your heart healthy, you and your family should limit the amount of salt that you eat.

This booklet will give you the information you need to reduce the salt in your diet and includes tips, ideas and recipes to help you cut down.

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# How does eating salt affect my heart?

## Eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure.

High blood pressure puts added force against the walls of your arteries (the blood vessels that carry blood towards your heart).

Over time this extra pressure can damage the arteries, which makes them more likely to become narrowed and hardened by fatty deposits.

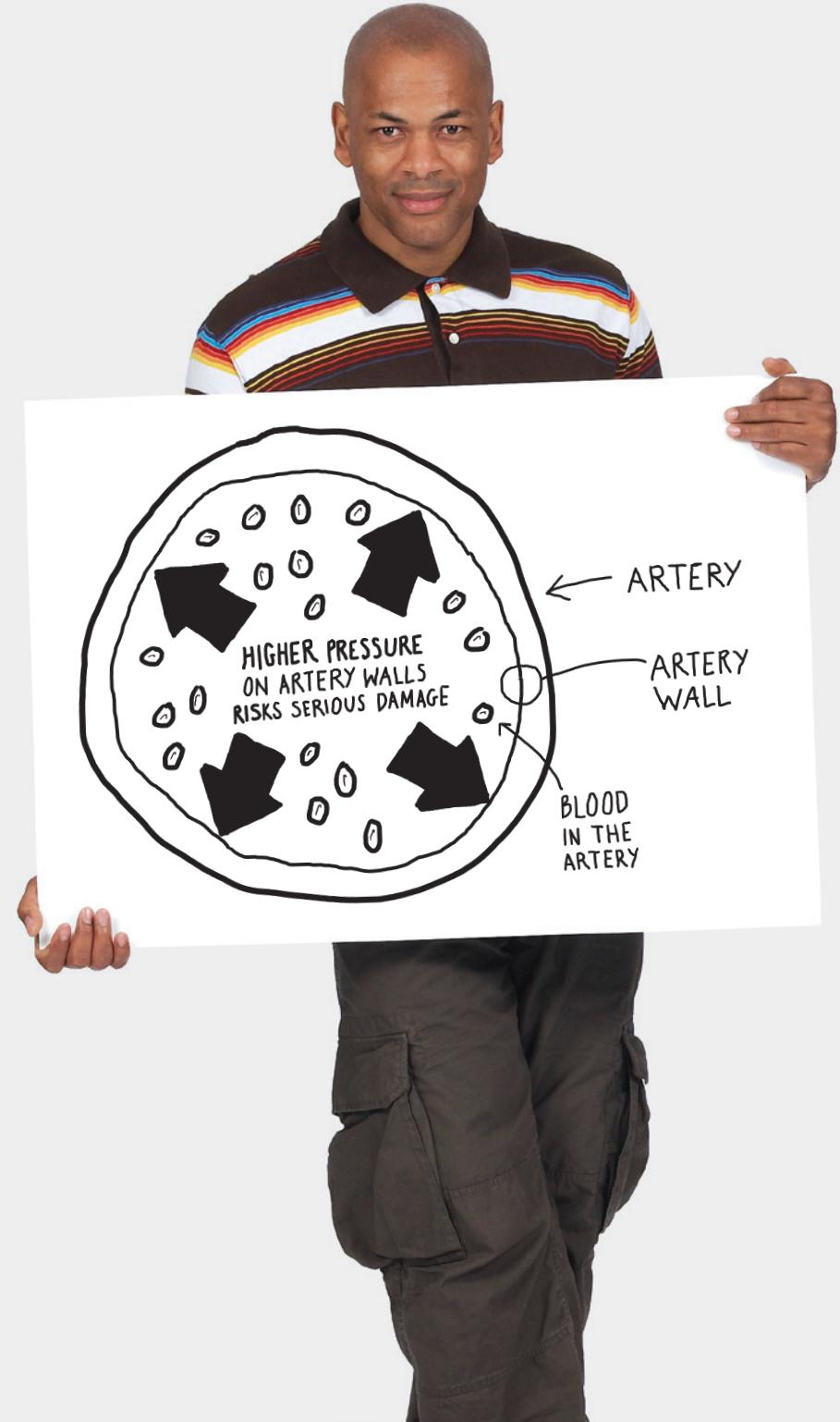
When this happens to your coronary arteries (the arteries that supply your heart muscle with oxygen-rich blood) this is coronary heart disease, which can lead to angina and heart attack.

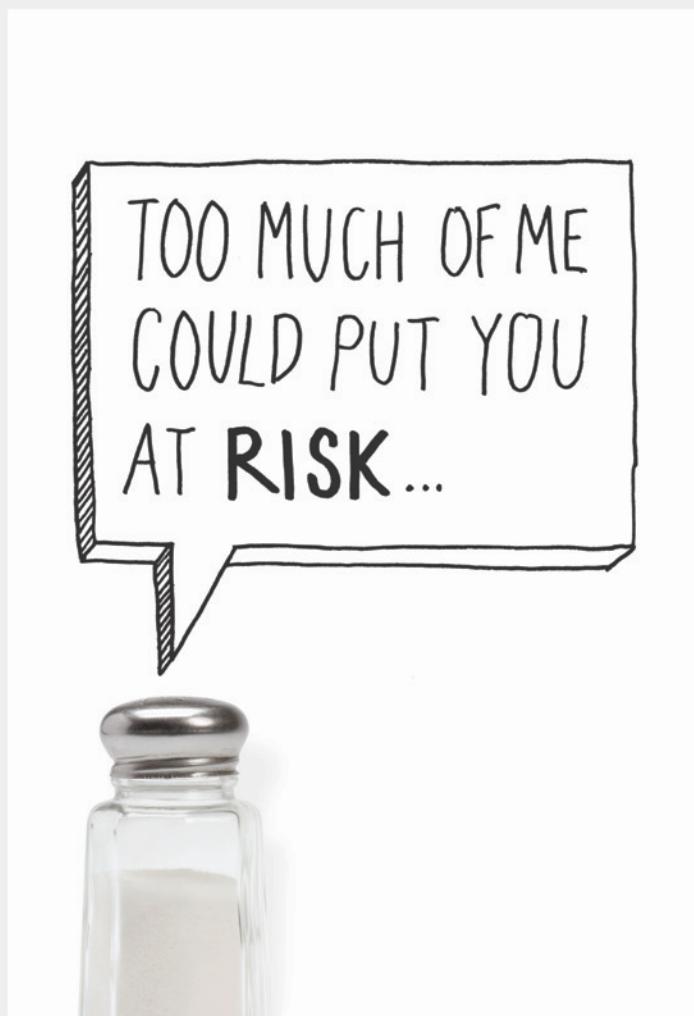
### Myth buster

#### But my blood pressure's fine!

Anyone can develop high blood pressure and it's very hard to tell if you have it because it rarely makes people feel ill – so even if you think your blood pressure is fine you should still limit the amount of salt you eat. Eating a balanced diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables, being physically active, not being overweight and limiting how much alcohol you drink can also help reduce your risk of developing high blood pressure.

If you've been diagnosed with low blood pressure (hypotension), talk to your doctor about how to manage your salt and fluid intake.





## Your guideline daily amount

**The Guideline Daily Amount (GDA) is a limit set by health experts to tell you how much salt you should have each day.**

The GDA of salt for adults is 6g per day – that's about one level teaspoon.



= 6g OF SALT (ADULT GDA)

It's not just the salt that you add to your meal that is included. The salt which is already 'hidden' within many everyday foods, and the salt you add during cooking also count towards your GDA.



The average adult in the UK consumes a massive 8g of salt each day. The good news is that there are some really simple steps you can take to reduce your salt intake and improve your long-term health.

## Salt and your family

**Eating too much salt is unhealthy for both children and adults. Children who eat higher levels of salt have higher blood pressure and this can continue into adulthood, where it increases the risk of heart attack and stroke.**

Babies and children under 11 should have less salt than adults. Babies under a year old need less than 1g of salt a day, as their kidneys can't cope with more.

There are daily recommended amounts of salt for children, according to their age.



### Recommendations for children

7-12 months	1g salt	0.4g sodium
1 to 3 years	2g salt	0.8g sodium
4 to 6 years	3g salt	1.2g sodium
7 to 10 years	5g salt	2g sodium
11 and over	6g salt	2.5 sodium

### Fast fact

#### What's sodium?

Sodium is another way of talking about the salt content of food. For more information, take a look at page 12.

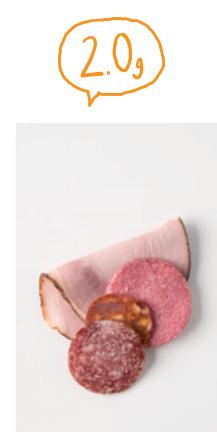
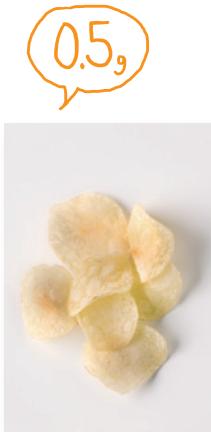


## Where's the salt?

**Around three quarters of the salt we eat has already been added to our food before we buy it, which means it can be difficult to tell how much salt you're eating.**

Most people already know that foods like crisps and processed foods are high in salt, but you might be surprised how much salt is in everyday foods that don't taste salty – such as cereal, breads, biscuits and cakes.

If you eat these foods often, the amount of salt you're eating can really add up.



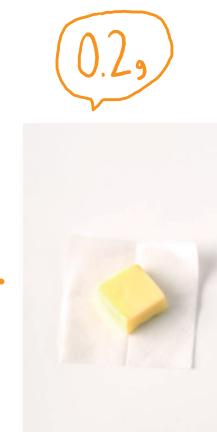
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↑ HIGHER (9)

Foods high in salt	Average salt content per portion
Bacon – two rashers (46g)	2.25g
Vegetable stock cube	2.0g
Packet of chicken noodle soup (250g made up)	2.0g
Vegetarian pizza (7 inch, 230g)	1.5g
Baked beans (200g)	1.4g
Pepperami (25g)	1.25g
Cured meat – two slices (24g)	1.0g
Soy sauce (5g)	1.0g
Bran cereal (30g)	0.5g
Cheese (30g)	0.5g
Ketchup (12g)	0.5g
Salted peanuts – one portion (50g)	0.5g
Ready salted crisps – one bag (32.5g)	0.5g
Granary bread – one slice	0.5g
Chocolate covered biscuits – two	0.4g
Butter (10g)	0.2g

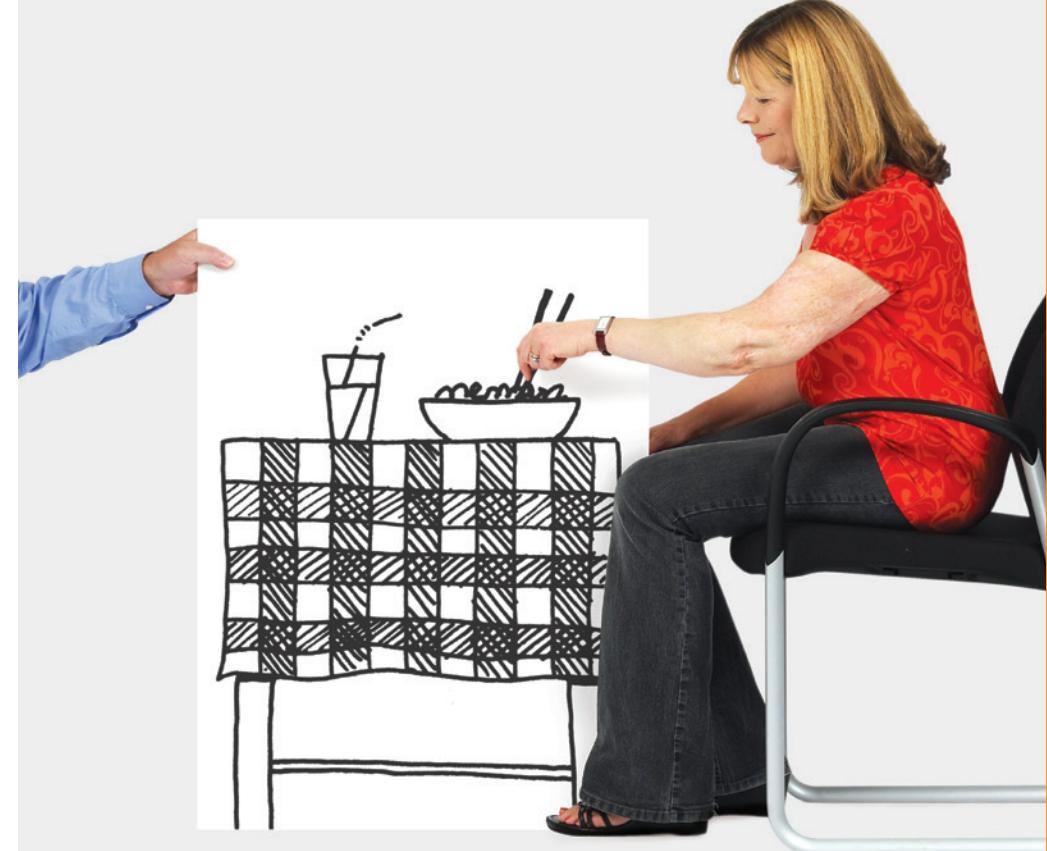


= **4.2g**  
**(70% of GDA)**

## Top tips to cut down on salt



- 1 The amount of salt varies between brands so it's important to use food labels to help you choose the healthier options.
- 2 Use food labels to help you choose lower-salt ingredients and meals.
- 3 Stop adding salt to your food at the table.
- 4 Choose alternatives to salt when you're cooking or preparing food.



# Always read the label

**The easiest way to work out how much salt you're eating is to check the food label (nutritional information) on the packaging.**

## 1 Traffic lights

Some food labels have traffic light colours which help you make your choice. You can see at a glance how much salt there is in your food.

**Red** = High in salt

**Amber** = Medium salt

**Green** = Low in salt

## 2 Per portion

When you're looking at how much salt is in your food, make sure you know whether you're looking at the amount of salt 'per portion' or the amount 'per 100g'.

## 3 GDA

To avoid going over your GDA, try to avoid products that contain 40% or more of an adult's GDA in one portion.

## 4 Sodium

You might see salt written as sodium on a food label. Sodium is just another way of talking about the salt content of food. It's measured differently to salt.

If you can only see a listing for sodium on a food label, you can work out how much salt is in the product by multiplying the sodium (in grams) by 2.5.



To find out more about food labels, order our *Guide to food labelling* (code G54).

Nutrition information				Guideline daily amounts		
Typical values (cooked as per instructions)	Per 100g	Per ½ pizza	% based on GDA per serving	Women	Men	Children (5–13 years)
Energy	1000 kJ 238 kcal	1977 kJ 470 kcal	23.5%	2000 kcal	2500 kcal	1800 kcal
Protein	9.3g	18.4g	40.9%	45g	55g	29g
Carbohydrate	28.7g	56.7g	24.7%	230g	300g	220g
of which sugars	2.7g	5.3g	5.9%	90g	120g	85g
of which starch	25.9g	51.2g	–	–	–	–
Fat	9.6g	19.0g	27.1%	70g	95g	70g
of which saturates	3.7g	7.3g	36.5%	20g	30g	20g
mono-unsaturates	4.0g	3.9g	–	–	–	–
polyunsaturates	1.6g	3.2g	–	–	–	–
Fibre	2.3g	4.5g	18.8%	24g	24g	15g
Salt	1.6g	3.2g	50%	6g	6g	4g
of which sodium	0.40g	0.79g	32.9%	2.4g	2.4g	1.4g

4

1

2

3

## Fast fact

What is low or high per 100g?



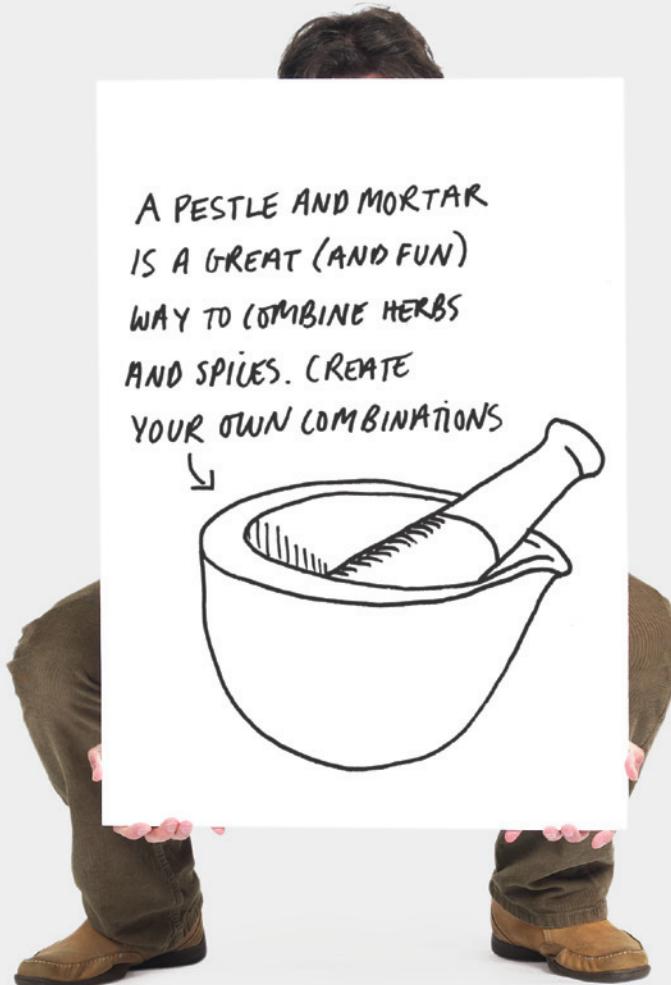
	Low: a healthier choice	High: just occasionally
Salt	0.3g or less	1.6g or more
Sodium	0.1g or less	0.6g or more

SALT = (SODIUM) × 2.5



## Top tips for passing the salt

Adding salt to your food can seem like a hard habit to break. Here are some tips to get you started. You'll be surprised how quickly your taste buds adapt.



### 1 In the kitchen

- Try cooking without salt or adding less salt to your cooking when boiling vegetables and making casseroles and sauces.
- Use spices and herbs to flavour foods rather than salt. This works really well even with foods such as potatoes, pasta, rice and couscous.
- Citrus fruits such as lemons and limes can add a zesty kick to fish, chicken and pork. Use them as a marinade with olive oil and garlic or simply squeeze the juices over your meal.
- Watch out for cooking sauces (especially soy sauce) and ready mixed 'seasonings' which can be very high in salt. If you're not sure how salty they are, check the label.
- Don't throw away your salt-free vegetable cooking liquid. Use it for gravies, soups, stews and sauces, instead of salty stock cubes.

### 2 At the table

- Banish the salt pot from your table.
- Taste your food before you season it. If it needs that little something extra, try adding pepper or fresh herbs instead.
- Switch salty snacks for fruit and vegetables – fresh, dried, tinned in natural juices all count. Aim for at least five portions a day.

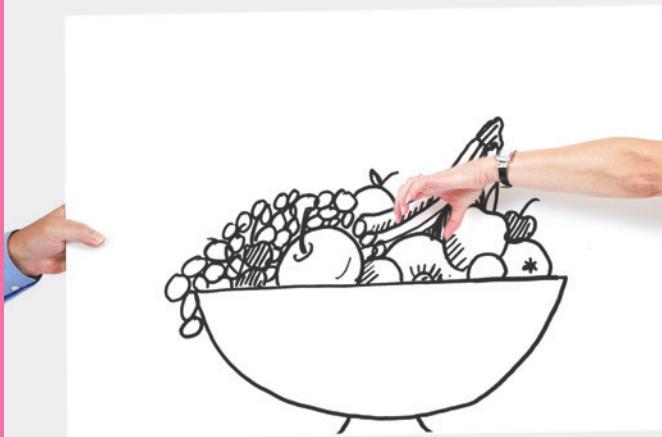
## Lower salt meal ideas

We all lead busy lives and it can seem daunting to make changes to your diet. With a bit of knowledge and preparation it is possible to find cheap, easy and tasty alternatives to your favourite salty foods.



For hundreds more healthy recipes go to the *Heart Matters* healthy recipe planner at [bhf.org.uk/heartmatters](http://bhf.org.uk/heartmatters)





## Breakfast

Some breakfast cereals can be high in salt and sugar, so check the label on your breakfast and think about swapping it for a lower-salt option.

Breakfast type (by serving)	Average salt content
Toast with butter	0.8g
Toast with Marmite® (4g)	0.7g
One egg (50g)	0.25g
Yoghurt (150g, low fat natural)	0.25g
Peanut butter (20g, on slice of bread)	0.25g
Sweetened cornflake cereal (40g)	0.4g
Cereal bar – chewy, eg Nutrigrain® (37g bar)	0.37g
Muesli – extra fruit (50g)	0.25g
Wheat biscuit cereal (two biscuits, 38g)	0.24g
Swiss style muesli (45g)	0.25g
Cereal bar – crunchy (28g bar)	0.05g
Shredded Wheat® (two biscuits, 45g)	Trace
Banana, apple, orange	0g
Fresh / frozen fruit salad	0g
Honey (20g, on slice of bread)	0g
Jam (15g, on slice of bread)	0g

Take a look at the packaging of your favourite breakfast – how does it measure up in comparison to the options above?

**My regular breakfast:** \_\_\_\_\_ g of salt per portion

## Lunch

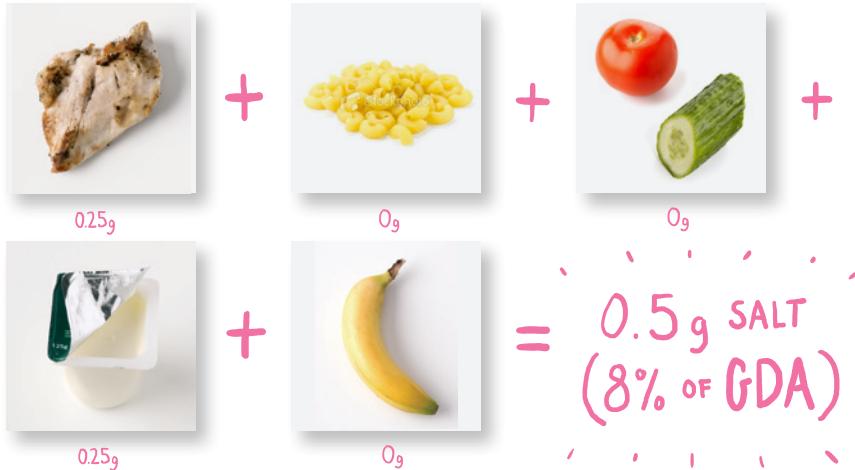


Take a look at the items you regularly have for lunch. How does your regular lunch measure up in comparison to these options?

### Adults

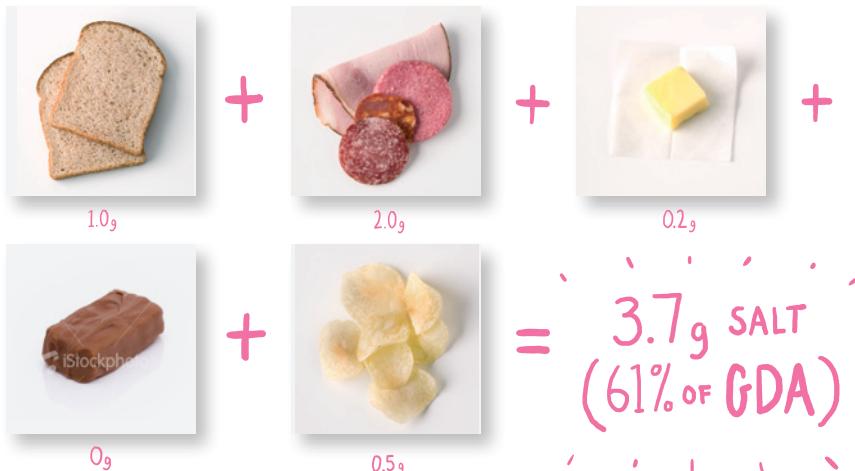
#### Low salt option

**Chicken pasta salad, yoghurt and banana**



#### High salt option

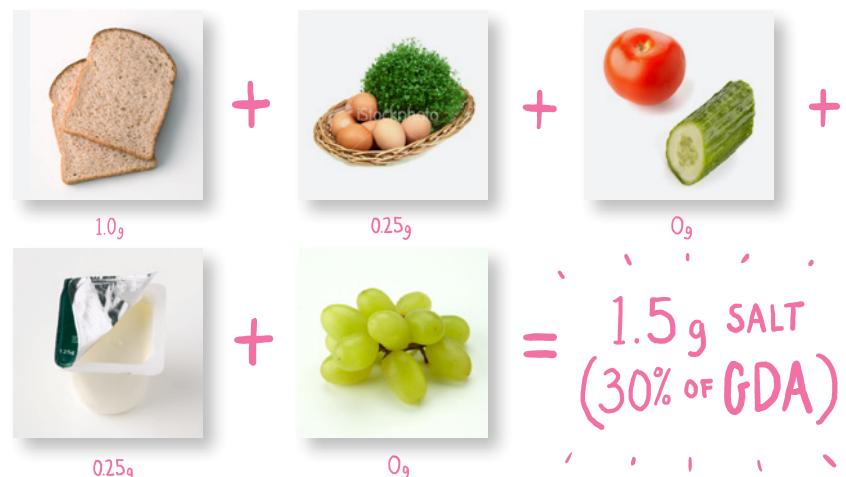
**Salami sandwich, crisps and chocolate**



### 7-10 year olds

#### Low salt option

**Egg and cress sandwich, yoghurt and grapes**



#### Regular option

**Cheese sandwich, crisps and chocolate**



## Dinner



These quick and easy recipes should help you whip up healthy, low salt meals in no time at all.

### Oven-baked fish with potato wedges



**Serves Two**

**Prep time 25 minutes**

**Cooking time 40 minutes**

#### Ingredients

For baked potato wedges:

- 400g (14oz) medium-sized potatoes, washed
- 2 tsp olive oil
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

For oven-baked fish and crushed peas:

- 25g (1oz) fresh breadcrumbs
- 1 tsp finely grated lemon zest
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 2 thick-cut sustainable white fish fillets (140g/5oz each)
- 12 cherry tomatoes on the vine
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 175-200g (6-7oz) frozen peas
- A little chopped fresh mint

#### Preparation

- Preheat oven to 220C/fan 200C/gas mark 7. For potato wedges, cut each potato into 8 even wedges; pat dry. Place in a bowl, add olive oil and black pepper; mix well to coat.
- Spread wedges out in a single layer in a shallow, non-stick roasting tin. Bake in oven for about 40 minutes, turning once or twice, until wedges are cooked.
- For fish, combine breadcrumbs, lemon zest, parsley and black pepper; spoon mixture over top of fish fillets, dividing evenly. Put fish in a separate non-stick roasting tin; put cherry tomatoes alongside. Drizzle olive oil over fish.
- Bake fish and tomatoes in oven for the final 10 minutes of wedges' cooking time, or until cooked. Meanwhile, cook peas in a pan of boiling water for 3 minutes; drain and return to pan. Crush peas lightly; season with black pepper and chopped mint. Serve.

#### Nutritional information

Per 100g			
Fat	Saturated fat	Salt	Sugar
Low	Low	Low	Low

Per portion (Percentage of GDA)				
Fat	Saturated fat	Salt	Sugar	Energy (kcal)
8.9g (13%)	1.3g (7%)	0.5g (8%)	6.3g (7%)	406 (20%)

# Linguine with leeks and mushrooms



**Serves** Two to three  
**Prep time** 10 minutes  
**Cooking time** 20 minutes

## Ingredients

- 250g (9oz) leeks (trimmed weight), washed and sliced(approx 3 medium leeks)
- 140g (5oz) button mushrooms, sliced or halved
- 1 bay leaf
- 20g (3/4oz) sunflower spread
- 20g (3/4oz) plain flour
- 250ml (9fl oz) semi skimmed milk
- 1 tablespoon snipped fresh chives (plus extra to garnish)
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 200g (7oz) fresh linguine

## Preparation

1. Steam leeks and mushrooms with bay leaf in a colander or steamer over a pan of boiling water for 10-15 minutes or until tender. Remove from heat and discard bay leaf; drain vegetables well and keep warm.
2. Melt sunflower spread in a non-stick saucepan, add flour and cook gently for 1 minute, stirring. Remove pan from heat; gradually whisk in milk. Return to the heat; bring to the boil, stirring until thickened. Reduce heat; simmer for 2 minutes, stirring. Add steamed vegetables, chives and black pepper and heat.
3. Meanwhile, cook pasta according to packet instructions until 'al dente' or firm to the bite. Drain pasta; return to pan. Add leek and mushroom sauce; toss lightly to mix. Serve, garnished with additional chives

## Nutritional information

Per 100g			
Fat	Saturated fat	Salt	Sugar
Low	Low	Low	Low

Per portion (Percentage of GDA)				
Fat	Saturated fat	Salt	Sugar	Energy (kcal)
8g (11%)	2.2g (11%)	0.3g (5%)	7g (8%)	310 (16%)

# Thai-turkey stir-fry



**Serves Two**

**Prep time 20 minutes**

**Cooking time 13 minutes**

## Ingredients

- 1 tsp cornflour
- 4 tbsp water
- 1 tbsp reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 2-3 tsp Thai fish sauce (nam pla)
- 2-3 tsp sunflower oil
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1cm (1/2 in) piece of root ginger, finely chopped
- 1 fresh red chilli, deseeded nad finely chopped
- 175g (6oz) skinless, boneless turkey breast strips
- 1 tsp hot chilli powder, or to taste
- 1 red pepper, deseeded and sliced
- 1 small courgette, cut into matchsticks
- 55g (2oz) beansprouts
- 1-2 tbsp chopped fresh coriander
- 360g (12 1/2oz) cooked rice

## Preparation

1. In a small bowl, mix cornflour with water until smooth. Stir in soy sauce and fish sauce; set aside.
2. Heat sunflower oil in a non-stick wok. Add red onion, garlic, ginger and chilli; stir-fry over a fairly high heat for about 1 minute to release flavours. Add turkey and chilli powder; stir for about 4 minutes or until turkey is coloured all over.
3. Add red pepper and courgette; stir-fry over a medium heat for 2-3 minutes. Add beansprouts; stir-fry for 1-2 minutes or until vegetables are softened and turkey is cooked.
4. Add cornflour mixture to wok; stir-fry over a medium heat for 1-2 minutes or until thickened and bubbling. Remove from heat; stir in coriander. Serve with rice.

## Cook's tips

Add the juice of half a lime at the end, along with the coriander. Serve with cooked rice noodles instead of rice (as shown in the picture).

## Nutritional information

Per 100g			
Fat	Saturated fat	Salt	Sugar
Low	Low	Low	Low

Per portion (Percentage of GDA)				
Fat	Saturated fat	Salt	Sugar	Energy (kcal)
8.6g (12%)	1.5g (8%)	1.5g (25%)	9.3g (10%)	456 (23%)

## Your weekly salt planner



If you want to find out if you're regularly eating more than the recommended daily amount of salt, use this weekly planner to record the amount of salt that you eat for a week.

Check the food labels on the food you eat and record it in the tables.



If you'd like to print out more copies of the salt planner, you can download a copy from [bhf.org.uk/cutdownsalt](http://bhf.org.uk/cutdownsalt)



### Monday

Meal	Foods eaten	Amount of salt (grams)
Breakfast		
Lunch		
Dinner		
Snacks		
Total salt for the day		

### Tuesday

Meal	Foods eaten	Amount of salt (grams)
Breakfast		
Lunch		
Dinner		
Snacks		
Total salt for the day		

## Wednesday

Meal	Foods eaten	Amount of salt (grams)
Breakfast		
Lunch		
Dinner		
Snacks		
Total salt for the day		

## Friday

Meal	Foods eaten	Amount of salt (grams)
Breakfast		
Lunch		
Dinner		
Snacks		
Total salt for the day		

## Thursday

Meal	Foods eaten	Amount of salt (grams)
Breakfast		
Lunch		
Dinner		
Snacks		
Total salt for the day		

## Saturday

Meal	Foods eaten	Amount of salt (grams)
Breakfast		
Lunch		
Dinner		
Snacks		
Total salt for the day		

## Sunday

Meal	Foods eaten	Amount of salt (grams)
Breakfast		
Lunch		
Dinner		
Snacks		
Total salt for the day		

### Notes

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## Resources from the British Heart Foundation (BHF)

**The BHF is the nation's heart charity, dedicated to saving lives through pioneering research, patient care, campaigning for change and by providing vital information.**

We produce a wide range of resources to help you and your family and friends look after your heart health-.

To order any of our heart health resources:

- ♥ Call the BHF Orderline on 0870 600 6566
- ♥ Email [orderline@bhf.org.uk](mailto:orderline@bhf.org.uk)
- ♥ Visit [bhf.org.uk/publications](http://bhf.org.uk/publications)

You can also download many of our publications from our website **bhf.org.uk**.

For information about all of our resources, ask for a copy of *Our heart health catalogue* (code G5).

## Inspired to make other lifestyle changes?

Cutting down on salt is only one part of keeping healthy to protect your heart. Being physically active, stopping smoking and managing stress are all important too and we have resources available to help you. Order or download the below booklets or visit **bhf.org.uk/prevention** for more information and advice.

- ♥ Eating well (code G186)
- ♥ Get active, stay active (code G12)
- ♥ Put your heart into walking (code G26)
- ♥ Coping with stress (code G187)
- ♥ Stop smoking (code G118)

Our resources and services are free of charge, but we rely on donations to continue our vital work. If you'd like to make a donation, please call our donation hotline on 0300 330 3322 or visit our website at **bhf.org.uk/donate.aspx**. Or, please complete the form at the end of this booklet and send it to us at the address on the back cover.

## Heart Matters

Heart Matters is our free, personalised service to help you live with a healthy heart. Join Heart Matters today to access benefits including *heart matters* magazine, a Helpline and an online members' area with recipes, articles and lifestyle tools. Register online at **bhf.org.uk/heartmatters** or call 0300 330 3300 (calls are charged at a similar cost to 01 or 02 numbers).



## How you can help

As a charity we rely on the generosity of people like you to fund our vital work. Thousands of people with heart disease turn to us for help every year and even more will need us in the future. We want to be there for them.

There are many ways you can get involved and play a crucial role in our efforts to beat heart disease:



Become a **volunteer** and help run our shops, support local events and fundraising or even campaign for the UK's heart health – there's something for everyone.



**Take part** in one of our events – they're a great way for you to have fun, get fit, and save lives. Choose from cycles, runs, walks and many more.



Join our Heartstart initiative and **learn to save lives** with the skills of emergency life support. Over 2.6 million people already have.



Give to your local BHF shop – it's easy to **donate your unwanted items** to us and help us raise vital funds.



Make a one-off **donation**, set up a direct debit, give in memory or leave a gift in your Will – there's lots of ways to support us.



Shop from the heart with our **online shop** – all profits from the BHF Shop help fund our life-saving work.

For more information visit **bhf.org.uk/youcanhelp** or call 020 7554 0000.

Thank you.



Please send this form to:

**British Heart Foundation**  
Greater London House  
180 Hampstead Road  
London NW1 7AW

**Thank you.**

# Help the BHF save more lives by supporting us with a donation today

Title  First Name  Surname   
Address   
 Postcode   
Phone   
Email

We would like to keep in touch with you to let you know how your support has made a difference.  
By supplying your email address you agree that the BHF may use this to contact you about our work.

**Please accept my gift of either £10  £15  £20  Other**

(Please make your cheque/postal order / CAF voucher payable to The British Heart Foundation.)

**OR please debit the above sum from my:**

AMEX  CAF Card  Master Card  Visa/Delta  Maestro  
Card No.                   (Maestro only)  
Valid from  /  Expiry date  /     Issue no   (security code) (Maestro only)

Signature  Date  /  /

**The British Heart Foundation is the nation's heart charity, registered charity number 225971 (England and Wales) and SC039426 (Scotland).**

Once completed, please return the whole of this form to:  
Freepost RRZJ-LCHX-EKCR, British Heart Foundation, Greater London House, 180 Hampstead Road, London NW1 7AW.

*giftaid it*

**Make your gift worth almost a third more – at no extra cost to you!**

**Are you a UK taxpayer?** If you are a UK taxpayer please tick the **first box** so we can claim back up to **25p** for every £1 you give **at no extra cost to you.**

GA1  Yes, I am a UK taxpayer and would like the BHF to reclaim the tax on any of the donations I have made in the last four years and any future donations I may make.\*

Date  /  /

GA2  No, I am a non-taxpayer.

\* To qualify for Gift Aid, you must pay an amount of UK Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the amount that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) will reclaim on your gifts for that tax year (6 April one year to 5 April the next) and you understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify.

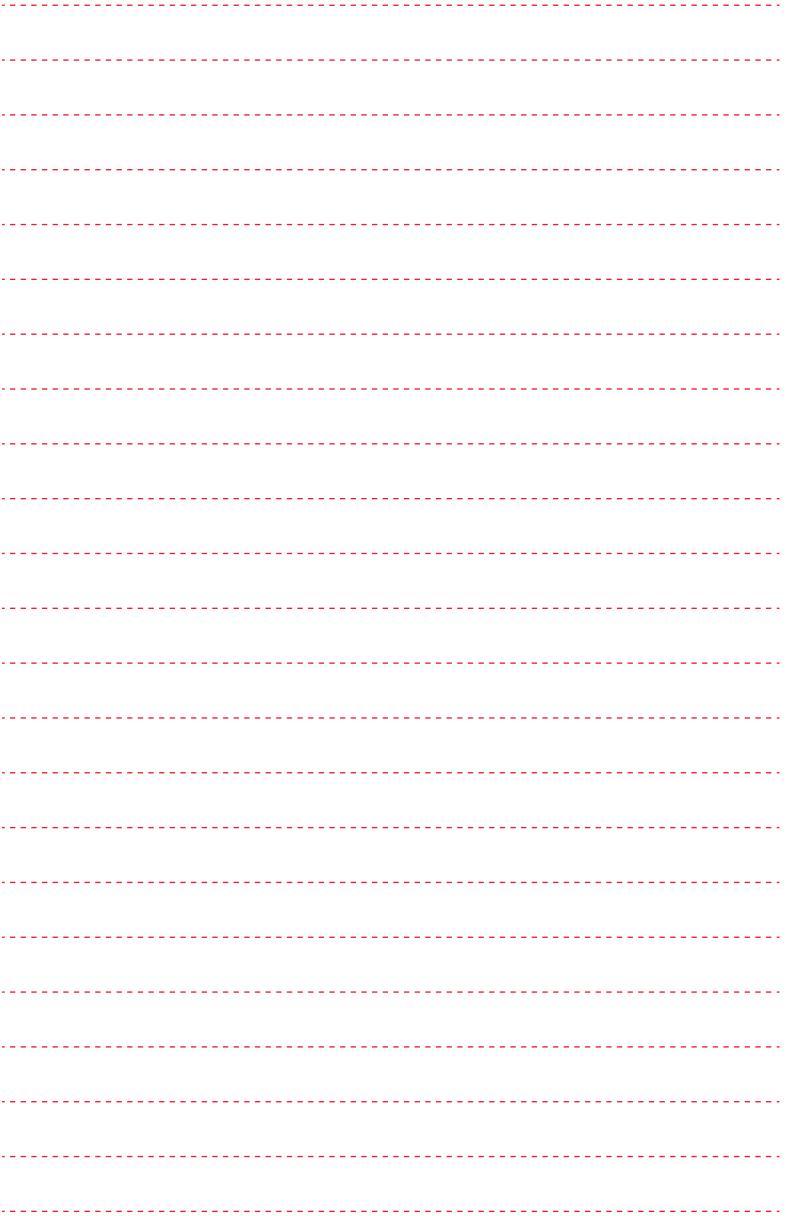
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- If you do **not** wish to be contacted by post, please tick this box. (MP0074)
- If you do **not** wish to hear from us by phone, please tick this box. (MP0075)
- From time to time we allow other similar organisations to contact our supporters. If you do **not** wish to be contacted by them, please tick this box. (MP0060)

## Notes

Notes





# Have your say

We would welcome your comments to help us produce the best information for you. Why not let us know what you think? Contact us via our website **[bhf.org.uk/contact](http://bhf.org.uk/contact)**

## Children's resources

Do you want the kids in your family to be more active and eat healthier? Help them make some changes now by encouraging them to visit the following websites:

- Heart cbhf.net a website for 7-11 year olds
  - Heart yheart.net and yoobot.co.uk websites for 12-19 year olds

We also produce free resources for parents, teachers and those who work with children to help them encourage young people to live a heart healthy lifestyle. Go to **[bhf.org.uk/teachers](http://bhf.org.uk/teachers)** for more information, or call the BHF Orderline on 0870 600 6566.

## Acknowledgements

The BHF would like to thank all who have given their time and support to develop this resource.



This publication has been printed  
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We are the nation's heart charity, dedicated to saving lives through pioneering research, patient care, campaigning for change and by providing vital information. But we urgently need your help. We rely on your donations of time and money to continue our life-saving work. Because together we can beat heart disease.

[bhf.org.uk/  
cutdownsalt](http://bhf.org.uk/cutdownsalt)

 Heart Helpline  
**0300 330 3311**  
[bhf.org.uk](http://bhf.org.uk)

Information & support on anything heart-related  
Phone lines open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday  
Similar cost to 01 or 02 numbers

British Heart Foundation  
Greater London House  
180 Hampstead Road  
London NW1 7AW  
T 020 7554 0000  
F 020 7554 0100