**Too Salty?**

*Researchers finding that we should be more concerned with salt consumption.*

Two studies were recently released which aimed to research salt intake. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and an Australian University each took a unique approach. The CDC looked at the diets of American children whereas the University of South Australia School of Pharmacy and Medical Science surveyed diabetics, their knowledge of how salt consumption can affect one’s health, and their tendencies to eat salt despite this knowledge. Both studies clearly showed that salt consumption throughout the world is alarmingly high and a large, contributing factor to health issues like heart disease.

The first study, conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “found that more than 90 percent of American children ages 6 to 18 consume too much sodium daily.” The recommended daily serving of sodium is 2,300mg. On average, those studied consumed 1,000mg of sodium more per day than recommended. Processed and restaurant foods seemed to be the issue as they are typically packed with sodium. Maintaining a diet with a high salt content showed to put children at risk for serious health issues, particularly high blood pressure and heart disease.

Possibly the more startling study of the two, by the University of South Australia School of Pharmacy and Medical Science, showed that many diabetics are aware of the negative effects sodium has on their health, yet it is not necessarily a concern. Researchers surveyed 143 participants with type 1 and type 2 diabetes. Of all the participants, only 10 listed salt as their biggest concern, with the majority noting sugar or saturated fats as their most significant worry. Researchers emphasized that “evidence [shows] a reduction in salt intake may help prevent strokes, heart attacks and other cardiovascular events.” They continued, “People with diabetes are already at higher risk of cardiovascular disease, so they need to be extra careful.”

Paying attention to your salt intake is crucial to avoiding health problems such as high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease. Stay away from foods with a high salt content, like pizza, cold cuts, salty snacks, and fast food, as suggested in the CDC’s findings. The researchers with the University of South Australia School of Pharmacy and Medical Science recommend shifting our focus, noting, “The focus should be on shifting to eating real food and less processed food, which will automatically reduce the sodium content and increase the intake of beneficial antioxidants and fiber.”

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/09/08/us-health-cardiovascular-diabetes-sodium-idUSKBN0H327M20140908>

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