Guardian Unlimited

(The Guardian)

August 1, 2011 Monday

Most **eight-month-old** babies **consume** too much **salt,** report says  
  
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**LENGTH:** 557 words

**ABSTRACT**

Study warns that 70% of infants **consume** high levels of **salt** in processed food, with cow's milk and bread two main concerns

Almost three-quarters of **eight-month-old** babies **consume** too much **salt** because they are fed too much processed food, cow's milk and bread, according to a report.

Processed food including tinned pasta, salty flavourings such as gravies and yeast extract are among the foodstuffs blamed by the Univeristy of Bristol researchers.

The nutritionists who carried out [the study](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/alspac/news/2011/17.html) warned that high levels of **salt** consumed at a very young age can harm developing kidneys, give children a taste for salty foods and lead to poor habits that can persist into adult life.

High blood pressure established in childhood can track through to adulthood, the report says.

It adds that it is "extremely important" that mothers receive clear and precise information over "appropriate foods" when they are weaning children.

Many parents are "unaware" of the amount of **salt** in manufactured foods and those of "low socio-economic status" tend to be less well informed about "suitable" foods.

The research is part of a long-term ongoing study of parents and youngsters called [Children of the Nineties](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/alspac/news/2011/14.html).

Though the raw research was done in the early 90s, the authors say it remains relevant and they would expect the results to be similar if it was carried out now.

According to the research, most infants were first introduced to solids when they were between three and four months old.

[The government's scientific advisory committee on nutrition advises](http://www.sacn.gov.uk/news_press_releases/press_releases/thursday_15_may_20%2003.html) that infants aged between seven and 12 months receive no more than 1g of **salt** a day.

The Bristol study found that 70% were receiving more than the recommended amount and some were consuming double the level recommended.

Those consuming most **salt** tended to be taking cow's milk as a main drink - which is not recommended for children under 12 months old - and to be eating bread. Salty flavourings, canned pasta, yeast extract and baked beans were other ingredients and food the researchers were concerned about.

Pauline Emmett and Vicky Cribb, the nutritionists who conducted the research, said: "These findings show **salt** intakes need to be substantially reduced in children of this age group.

"Infants need foods specifically prepared for them without added **salt**, so it is important to adapt the family diet.

This research suggests that clear advice is needed for parents about what foods are suitable for infants.

"This should be given to all parents and carers, and should include the important advice not to use cows' milk as a main drink before 12 months of age."

The researchers said progress had been made since the data was collected, with more manufacturers reducing the **salt** content of foods.

But they said more needed to be done.

"Given that three-quarters of **salt** in the diet comes from processed adult foods, successful **salt**-reduction strategies can only be achieved with the co-operation of the food industry.

"Manufacturers have a responsibility to reduce the **salt** content of food products. This process has already started in UK but much more needs to be done.

"If this study were repeated today it is likely that there would be some improvement but not enough to safeguard the health of all babies."

The findings are being published by the European Journal of Clinical Nutrition.