WHAT IS A LOW SALT DIET?

You may have been told by your medical team that you need to follow a low salt diet. **But, what is a low salt diet? Let's start with the basics!**

What is salt?

Salt is made up of two **minerals**; **sodium** and **chloride**. Sodium is a special type of mineral called an **electrolyte**. Electrolytes such as sodium help keep things in balance in the body.

Sodium plays a special role in the body. It:

1. Makes sure the right amount of water is in the body.

2. Helps ensure your muscles move when you want them to.

3. Helps your body use the other nutrients from the food that you eat.

However, the body only needs a little bit of sodium or salt from food in order to do these things.

Why is it important to reduce the amount of salt that I eat if my kidneys aren't working well?

TOO MUCH SALT CAN LEAD TO HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE
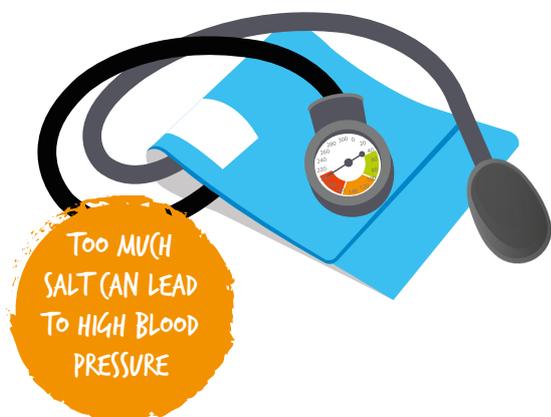
Our bodies don't need very much salt and lots of foods have salt in them. When the kidneys are not working very well, it is hard to get rid of the extra sodium that we have eaten. Too much sodium also makes the heart work harder – it can lead to high blood pressure (also known as hypertension). Some people keep extra water (fluid) in their body when they eat too much salt. This can cause parts of their body to swell up, such as their ankles.
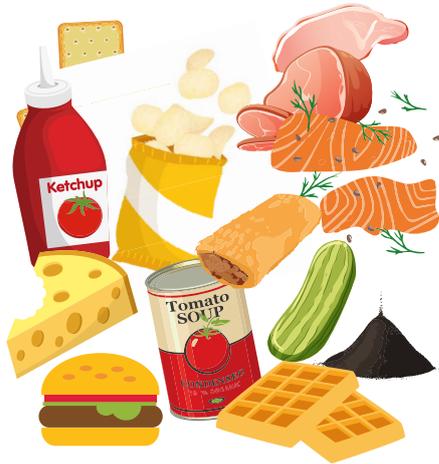
How do I get the right amount of salt?

It is recommended that adults have no more than 5g of salt per day - this is under 1 teaspoon per day. Children should have even less than this.

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What foods are high in salt?

Try to limit the following foods as they are known to be high in salt:

- Salty snack foods such as crisps and salted crackers
- Bacon and cured meats
- Smoked meat and fish
- Condiments like soy sauce and ketchup
- Sausage rolls
- Pickles
- Tinned and processed foods
- Cheese
- Takeaway foods
- Gravy granules
- Processed products made with potato such as waffles and potato faces

It's important to learn how to find the words **"salt"** or **"sodium"** on food labels. The picture below shows a food label and how to spot if a food contains salt. Some food labels will use a traffic light system to show if a food is high or low in salt, with red being high and green being low in salt.

Nutrition Information		
Typical Values	Per 100g	Each pack (400g)
Energy	479kJ / 116kcal	1916kJ / 464kcal
Fat	4.0g	16.0g
Of which saturates	1.9g	7.6g
Carbohydrate	12.2g	48.8g
Of which sugars	1.8g	7.2g
Fibre	0.9g	3.6g
Protein	6.8g	27.2g
Salt	**1.6g**	**6.4g**

TRY USING OUR SALT FOOD LABELLING CARD TO HELP YOU KNOW WHICH FOODS ARE HIGH AND LOW IN SALT.

HOW MUCH SALT IS TOO MUCH?

0.3g or less Per 100g
Healthiest option

0.3g to 1.5g Per 100g
Consume in moderation

More than 1.5g Per 100g
Too high, try to limit

If you / your child have been advised to follow a low salt diet as part of the dietary management for kidney disease, this information card will help you decide which foods are best.

	Sodium	Salt	
Low	0.12g or less	0.3g or less	Best option
Moderate	0.12g to 0.6g	0.3g to 1.5g	Be careful
High	more than 0.6g	more than 1.5g	Try to avoid

Use this card to compare the salt content of foods **per 100g**.

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CONTINUED...

How can I still eat a healthy diet?

Eating a diet with a whole variety of foods is best. Try to eat more fresh foods that come from plants, like fruits and vegetables. Try to make more homemade meals and avoid using packaged and convenience foods. Ask your parents or guardians if they will show you how to make some of your favourite meals using fresh ingredients - try preparing some fruit or vegetables for the family meal or learn to cook simple meals with only a few ingredients.

My reduced salt diet

For my breakfast I can choose:

For my mid-morning snack I can choose:

For my lunch I can choose:

For my mid-afternoon snack I can choose:

For my evening meal I can choose:

My drinks throughout the day:

Always check with your Dietitian regarding which foods you can have and which foods you should limit in your diet. Everyone's needs are different.

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