

## **Guidelines for a Low Sodium Diet**

### **General Tips for Reducing Sodium Intake**

If your doctor recommends that you reduce your sodium intake, here are some general guidelines for cutting down the amount of salt in your diet.

- Special foods are not required for this diet. Eliminating salty foods from your diet and reducing the amount of salt used in cooking are important steps.
- Many salt-free or reduced-salt products are available. You may choose low-sodium products to replace foods which are not allowed.
  - Salt substitutes may be used with your doctor's permission.
- Be creative and season your food with spices, herbs, lemons, oranges, wine and Tabasco sauce. Move the salt shaker off the table.
- Read ingredient labels to identify foods high in sodium. High-sodium food additives include salt, baking powder, brine or other items that say "sodium," such as monosodium glutamate (MSG).
- Eat more home-cooked meals. Foods cooked from scratch are naturally lower in sodium, since you are in control of how much salt is added.
  - Avoid softened water for cooking and drinking since it contains added salt.
  - Avoid medications that contain sodium, such as alka seltzer and bromo seltzer.
- For more information on specific foods, or if you want to actually calculate your daily sodium intake, you might consider reading food labels or use a sodium reference guide.

### **Meats, Poultry, Fish, Legumes, Eggs and Nuts**

#### **High-Sodium Foods:**

- Smoked, cured, salted or canned meat, fish or poultry including bacon, cold cuts, ham, frankfurters, sausage, sardines, caviar and anchovies
  - Frozen breaded meats and dinners, such as burritos and pizza
    - Canned entrees, such as ravioli, spam and chili
      - Salted nuts

#### **Low-Sodium Alternatives:**

- Any fresh or frozen beef, lamb, pork, poultry and fish
  - Eggs and egg substitutes

- Low-sodium peanut butter
- Dry peas and beans (not canned)
  - Low-sodium canned fish
- Drained, water or oil packed canned fish or poultry

## **Dairy Products**

### **High-Sodium Foods:**

- Buttermilk
- Regular and processed cheese, cheese spreads and sauces
  - Cottage cheese

### **Low-Sodium Alternatives:**

- Milk, yogurt, ice cream and ice milk
- Low-sodium cheeses, cream cheese, ricotta cheese and mozzarella

## **Breads, Grains and Cereals**

### **High-Sodium Foods:**

- Bread and rolls with salted tops
- Quick breads, self-rising flour, biscuit, pancake and waffle mixes
  - Pizza, croutons and salted crackers
- Prepackaged, processed mixes for potatoes, rice, pasta and stuffing

### **Low-Sodium Alternatives:**

- Breads, bagels and rolls without salted tops
  - Muffins and most ready-to-eat cereals
- All rice and pasta, but do not to add salt when cooking
  - Corn and flour tortillas and noodles
  - Low-sodium crackers and breadsticks
  - Unsalted popcorn, chips and pretzels

## **Vegetables and Fruits**

### **High-Sodium Foods:**

- Regular canned vegetables and vegetable juices
- Olives, pickles, sauerkraut and other pickled vegetables
  - Vegetables made with ham, bacon or salted pork
- Packaged mixes, such as scalloped or au gratin potatoes, frozen hash browns and Tater Tots
  - Commercially prepared pasta and tomato sauces

### **Low-Sodium Alternatives:**

- Fresh and frozen vegetables without sauces
- Low-sodium canned vegetables, sauces and juices
- Fresh potatoes, frozen French fries and instant mashed potatoes
  - Low-salt tomato or V-8 juice.
  - Most fresh, frozen and canned fruit

### **Soups**

#### **High-Sodium Foods:**

- Regular canned and dehydrated soup, broth and bouillon

#### **Low-Sodium Alternatives:**

- Low-sodium canned and dehydrated soups, broth and bouillon
  - Homemade soups without added salt

### **Fats, Desserts and Sweets**

#### **High-Sodium Foods:**

- Bottled salad dressings, regular salad dressing with bacon bits
  - Salted butter or margarine
  - Instant pudding and cake

#### **Low-Sodium Alternatives:**

- Unsalted butter or margarine
- Vegetable oils and sodium-free salad dressings
  - All desserts made without salt