



Low-Sodium Eating

It is important for your child and their condition that they eat less sodium. Sodium is in salty foods and preservatives. There are lots of ways to make food without much sodium.

What is sodium?

Sodium is found in table salt, baking soda, and many food preservatives. Processed foods and fast foods are usually very high in sodium.

Why does my child need a low-sodium diet?

Your child might need a low-sodium diet if they:

- Have edema
- Retain fluid or get bloated easily
- Have high blood pressure

How can I help my child eat low sodium foods?

This handout includes charts with ingredients that are lower in sodium and high-sodium foods to limit. Follow these guidelines to make healthy, low-sodium choices. It is best to avoid fast food and high sodium processed foods. Watch our “Healthy Eating with Less Sodium” videos at www.seattlechildrens.org/lowsodiumeating.

What ingredients or foods should I use or limit when I make food for my child?

Food group	Foods to choose	Foods to limit
Spices and Seasonings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh or dried herbs (cilantro, basil, oregano) • Dried spices (cumin, cinnamon) • Pepper • Mrs. Dash • Fresh garlic and onion • Garlic and onion powder • Lemon or lemon juice • Oils (olive, vegetable, coconut) • Nutritional yeast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salt • MSG • Soy, teriyaki, fish or oyster sauce • Taco seasoning • Johnny’s season salt • Montreal steak seasoning • Garlic or onion salt • Bouillon and broth • Baking powder • Baking soda
Fruits	All fruits are OK including fresh, frozen and canned	

Food group	Foods to choose	Foods to limit
Condiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low sodium ketchup• Vinegars (balsamic, rice)• Homemade salsa• Homemade guacamole• Homemade vinaigrette• Jelly or jam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ketchup, mustard, BBQ sauce, A1 steak sauce• Tartar sauce• Relish• Salad dressing• Olives and pickles• Gravies and marinades
Bread and cereals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pasta (cooked without salt)• Shredded wheat• “Puffed” cereals• Oatmeal (old -fashioned or quick)• Rice• Whole wheat breads (check label)• English muffins• Corn tortillas• Pita bread• Couscous, grits, barley, quinoa (cooked without salt)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Noodle mixes (Macaroni and cheese, Top Ramen, Cup O’ Noodles, Hamburger Helper)• Rice mixes (Rice-a-Roni)• Hotdog or hamburger buns• Hoagie rolls, white breads• Bagels and soft pretzels• Pancake mixes, Bisquick• Flour tortillas• Eggo waffles• Biscuits• Stuffing (from packaged mix)
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fresh vegetables• Frozen vegetables• Canned vegetables with no added salt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frozen vegetables in sauces• Canned vegetables

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Food group	Foods to choose	Foods to limit
Meats and protein	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fresh fish• Water-packed tuna (check label)• Fresh poultry• Eggs• Ground turkey• Tofu• Fresh beef (steak, ground)• Canned or dried beans with no added salt• Nut butters (peanut, almond)• Hummus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shellfish (shrimp, crab)• Canned meats• Smoked meats (salmon)• Bacon• Hot dogs and bratwurst• Corned beef• Deli meats• Sausage, chorizo• Canned baked beans• Ham• Salami, pepperoni
Dairy products	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Milk• Soy, Almond, Rice milk• Yogurt• Natural cheese (mozzarella, swiss, cheddar, jack)• Cream, half-and-half	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Buttermilk• Evaporated milk• Sweetened condensed milk• Processed cheese (American, Velveeta)• Nacho cheese mix
Main dishes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homemade casseroles• Low-salt soups• Homemade stews or chili• Homemade pizza	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• TV dinners (Banquet, Lean Cuisine)• Lunchables• Canned soups & stews• Jarred sauces (Alfredo, spaghetti)• Canned chili• Frozen foods (lasagna, burritos, pizzas)• Hot pockets• Fast foods (McDonalds, Wendy's)

How do I know how much sodium is in food?

Food labels tell you about what is in the packaged food. You can find out how much sodium is in a food by reading the food label. First, find out how much food is in a *servicing size*. Then find out how much *sodium* is in one serving.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (236ml) ← Serving size	
Servings Per Container 1	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 80	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol Less than 5mg	0%
Sodium 120mg ← Sodium	5%
Total Carbohydrate 11g	4%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 11g	
Protein 9g	17%
Vitamin A 10% • Vitamin C 4%	
Calcium 30% • Iron 0% • Vitamin D 25%	
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	

Read the label

Look for foods labeled “low sodium,” “reduced sodium” or “no added salt.” Limit foods that are “high” and “very high” sodium foods. These can add up quickly to your child’s daily sodium limit.

Very low sodium	Less than 35 mg sodium per serving
Low sodium	35 to 140 mg sodium per serving
Medium sodium	140 to 250 mg sodium per serving
High sodium	250 to 500 mg sodium per serving
Very high sodium	more than 500 mg sodium per serving

How much sodium can my child have in a day?

_____ mg each day

This would be about: _____ mg per meal

_____ mg per snack

Tips for reducing sodium in your child's diet

- Don't salt food at the table.
- Take lunch from home instead of buying lunch at school.
- Omit seasoning packets (or reduce the amount used) from Top Ramen and Cup O' Noodles and use dried herbs and spices instead.
- Use shredded cheddar cheese instead of the cheese packet for boxed macaroni and cheese.
- Make homemade salad dressings.
- Buy low sodium canned soups, vegetables and broths. If you use canned foods that aren't low in sodium, rinse them before eating.
- Use vinegars, lemon and lime to flavor foods.
- Don't add salt to water when cooking rice or pastas.
- Use unsalted butter or peanut butter.
- Try using less salt than a recipe calls for (will not work with baking).

Allow soups and sauces to sit (refrigerated) overnight. The salt flavor may become richer as they sit.

Low-sodium menu ideas

A low-sodium diet can be healthy for all family members. Use the ideas below to make low-sodium meals for the whole family to enjoy. You don't have to make all of these changes at one time. It is okay to slowly reduce the amount of salt in your diet to allow your taste for salt to change over time.

Breakfast

- Wheat toast or English muffin with peanut butter
- Fruit and yogurt parfait
- Fruit smoothie
- Scrambled eggs
- Oatmeal
- Homemade waffles and pancakes
- Low sodium turkey sausage or turkey bacon
- Wheat or hearty cereal with low fat milk (Raisin Bran, Granola, Shredded Wheat)

Lunch and snacks

- Peanut butter and jelly sandwich
- Tuna sandwich with low sodium canned tuna
- Egg salad sandwich
- Roast turkey sandwich (using low-sodium turkey meat)
- Hummus and pita

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To Learn More

- Your child's dietitian:

- Nutrition
206-987-4758
- Ask your child's
healthcare provider
- www.seattlechildrens.org

- Fruits and vegetables
- Milk (1% or nonfat)
- Granola bars
- String cheese
- Yogurt
- Homemade guacamole with tortilla chips
- Low sodium crackers and cheese
- Hard boiled egg
- Apples with peanut butter
- Apple or pear slices sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar

Dinner

- Baked chicken or fish with steamed vegetables and rice
- Homemade macaroni and cheese
- Homemade spaghetti with meat sauce
- Homemade pizza
- Mixed green salad with homemade vinaigrette

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child's nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

Resources

- Healthy Eating with Less Sodium videos:
www.seattlechildrens.org/lowsodiumeating
- Choose my plate: www.choosemyplate.gov

Low sodium recipes:

- "Low Sodium Recipes" at www.seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE1593.pdf or Spanish version at www.seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE1593S.pdf
- PCC Natural Markets Kids Cooking Videos
www.pccnaturalmarkets.com/pcc/videos/source/healthy-kids
- Mayo Clinic low sodium recipes:
www.mayoclinic.com/health/low-sodium-recipes/RE00101
- Healthy recipes for Kids:
www.eatright.org/kids

Seattle Children's offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

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