

# Low-Sodium Eating

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It is important for your child and their condition that they eat less sodium. There are many ways to make food without much sodium, or order foods when eating out to help your child eat less sodium.

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## What is sodium?

Sodium is found in table salt, many food preservatives, and processed (packaged, frozen, and canned) foods. Foods served at fast food restaurants are usually very high in sodium.

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## 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
  - Are fluid restricted
  - Have high blood pressure
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## How much sodium can my child have in a day?

\_\_\_\_\_mg each day.

Or about \_\_\_\_\_ mg per meal and \_\_\_\_\_mg per snack.

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## How can I help my child eat low-sodium foods?

Use the guidelines in this handout to help your child make healthy, low-sodium choices and try these tips:

- Do not salt food.
  - Limit how often you eat fast foods and processed foods.
  - Do not use seasoning packets (or use less than the directions suggest) from packaged food like Top Ramen, Hamburger Helper, or Macaroni and Cheese and use dried herbs and spices or real cheese instead.
  - Make homemade sauces and salad dressings.
  - Buy low-sodium canned soups, vegetables and broths. If you use canned foods that are not low in sodium, rinse them before eating.
  - Drain broth from packaged soup like Cup Noodles or Bowl Noodle.
  - Use vinegars, lemon and lime to flavor foods.
  - Do not add salt to water when cooking rice or pastas.
  - Use unsalted butter and unsalted 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.
  - Help your child make healthy choices at home and school.
  - You do not have to make all of these changes at one time. It is OK to slowly make changes to allow your child's taste for salt to change.
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### To Learn More

- Nutrition  
206-987-4758
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- [seattlechildrens.org](http://seattlechildrens.org)

### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your 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.

### Guidelines for making low sodium choices



#### Foods to choose



#### Foods to limit

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### Spices and seasonings

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fresh or dried herbs (cilantro, basil, oregano)</li><li>• Dried spices (cumin, cinnamon)</li><li>• Pepper</li><li>• Mrs. Dash</li><li>• Fresh garlic and onion</li><li>• Garlic and onion powder</li><li>• Lemon or lemon juice</li><li>• Oils (olive, vegetable, coconut)</li><li>• Nutritional yeast</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Salt</li><li>• MSG</li><li>• Soy, teriyaki, fish or oyster sauce</li><li>• Taco seasoning packets</li><li>• Johnny's seasoning salt</li><li>• Montreal steak seasoning</li><li>• Garlic or onion salt</li><li>• Bouillon and broth</li></ul> |
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### Condiments

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low-sodium ketchup</li><li>• Vinegars (balsamic, rice)</li><li>• Homemade salsa</li><li>• Homemade guacamole</li><li>• Homemade vinaigrette</li><li>• Jelly or jam</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ketchup, mustard, BBQ sauce</li><li>• A1 steak sauce</li><li>• Tartar sauce</li><li>• Relish</li><li>• Salad dressing</li><li>• Olives and pickles</li><li>• Gravy and marinades</li></ul> |
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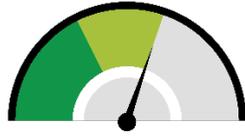
### Bread and cereals

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pasta (cooked without salt)</li><li>• Shredded wheat</li><li>• "Puffed" cereals</li><li>• Oatmeal (old-fashioned or quick)</li><li>• Rice</li><li>• Whole wheat breads (check label)</li><li>• Corn tortillas</li><li>• Pita bread</li><li>• Couscous, grits, barley, quinoa (cooked without salt)</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Noodle mixes (Macaroni and cheese, Top Ramen, Cup Noodles, Hamburger Helper)</li><li>• Rice mixes (Rice-a-Roni)</li><li>• Hotdog or hamburger buns</li><li>• Hoagie rolls, white breads</li><li>• Bagels and soft pretzels</li><li>• Pancake mixes (Bisquick or Krusteaz)</li><li>• Flour tortillas</li><li>• Eggo waffles</li><li>• Biscuits</li><li>• Stuffing (from packaged mix)</li><li>• Sweet rolls and croissants</li></ul> |
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### Fruits

- All fruits are OK including fresh, frozen and canned



### Foods to choose



### Foods to limit

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#### Vegetables

- Fresh vegetables
  - Frozen vegetables
  - Canned vegetables with no added salt
- Frozen vegetables in sauces
  - Canned vegetables

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#### Meats and protein

- 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
- 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

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#### Dairy products

- Milk
  - Soy, almond, or rice milk
  - Yogurt
  - Natural cheese (mozzarella, Swiss, cheddar, jack)
  - Cream, half-and-half
- Buttermilk
  - Evaporated milk
  - Sweetened condensed milk
  - Processed cheese (American, Velveeta)
  - Nacho cheese mix

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#### Main dishes

- Homemade casseroles
  - Low-salt soups
  - Homemade stew or chili
  - Homemade pizza
- 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, Subway, Chipotle)

### Tips when ordering fast food

Fast food may have very high amounts of sodium, but there are low-sodium options your child can eat. Look up the sodium content of the menu online and order the options lowest in sodium. You can also ask for foods to be cooked in a way that lowers the sodium, like no salt on fries.

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### Hamburgers

#### Ask to add:

- Extra fresh vegetables as toppings, like lettuce and tomatoes

#### Ask to leave off:

- Salt and other spices
- High-sodium condiments and toppings like pickles, bacon, extra cheese, BBQ sauce, and special sauce
- Mustard and ketchup are OK in small amounts- only 1 packet is best, since each has about 150-200 mg sodium

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### French Fries

#### Ask to leave off:

- Salt (a regular order of small fries has about 135 mg sodium, without added salt it has only 25 mg sodium)
- “Curly” or “coated” fries (these are pre-seasoned and high in sodium)

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### Pizza

Pizza is very high in sodium. Try to limit how often your child eats pizza.

#### Order:

- Veggie or vegetarian pizza
- Pizza with half the amount of cheese
- Thin crust

#### Ask to leave off:

- High-sodium toppings like olives, bacon, sausage, Canadian bacon, and pepperoni

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### Latin Food

#### Order:

- Corn instead of flour tortillas
- “Fresco” style with added vegetables

#### Ask to leave off:

- Rice and beans
- High-sodium toppings like beans, guacamole, and salsa (salsas vary in their sodium content, so limit to 1 Tablespoon or packet)
- High-sodium sides like soup or salted chips

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### Asian Food

- Order items that feature vegetables
- Avoid MSG, soy sauce and other sauces or ask for low-sodium soy sauce and use very small amounts or dilute it.

## How do I know how much sodium is in food?

You can find out how much sodium is in a food by reading the food's Nutrition Facts label. First, find out how much food is in a **servicing size**. Then find out how much **sodium** is in one serving. Choose foods labeled "low-sodium," "reduced-sodium," or "no added salt."

### Ketchup

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
33 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	1 Tbsp (17g)
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>15</b>
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 0g	<b>0%</b>
Saturated Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 160mg	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 4g	<b>1%</b>
Dietary Fiber 0g	<b>0%</b>
Total Sugars 4g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	<b>0%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 0g	
Vitamin A	<b>2%</b>
Vitamin C	<b>2%</b>
Iron	<b>0%</b>
Calcium	<b>0%</b>

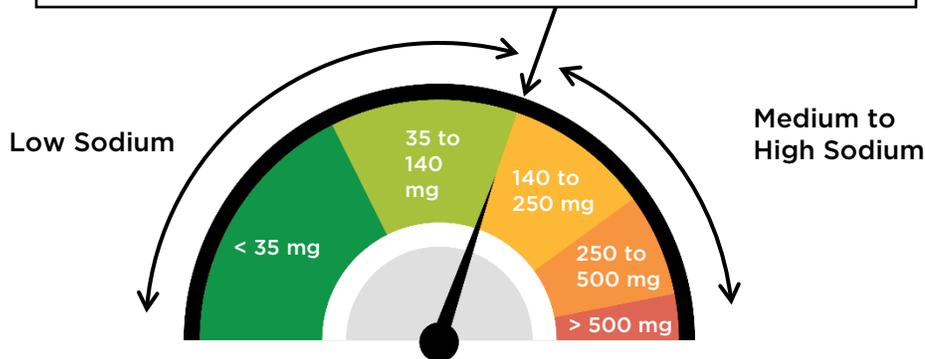
\*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

### Packaged Instant Noodles

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
1 serving per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	1 container (64g)
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>290</b>
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 11g	<b>17%</b>
Saturated Fat 5g	<b>26%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> Less than 5mg	<b>2%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 1150mg	<b>48%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 42g	<b>14%</b>
Dietary Fiber 2g	<b>10%</b>
Total Sugars 1g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	<b>0%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 11g	
Vitamin A	<b>6%</b>
Vitamin C	<b>6%</b>
Iron	<b>15%</b>
Calcium	<b>2%</b>

\*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Choose mostly foods that have 140 mg of sodium or less



- **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

### Low-sodium meal and snack ideas

A low-sodium diet can be healthy for all family members. Use the ideas below to make low-sodium meals and snacks the whole family enjoys.

- Eggs (scrambled, hardboiled, poached)
- Oatmeal
- Homemade waffles and pancakes
- Low-sodium turkey sausage or turkey bacon
- Granola bars
- Wheat or hearty cereal with low fat milk (Raisin Bran, Granola, Shredded Wheat)
- Milk (1% or nonfat)
- String cheese
- Low-sodium crackers and cheese
- Yogurt
- Fruit and yogurt parfait
- Fruit smoothie
- Fruits and vegetables
- Apples with unsalted peanut butter
- Apple or pear slices sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar
- Homemade guacamole with corn tortilla chips
- Hummus and pita
- Wheat toast with unsalted peanut butter
- Peanut butter and jelly sandwich
- Tuna sandwich with low-sodium canned tuna
- Egg salad sandwich
- Roast turkey sandwich (using low-sodium turkey meat)
- 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

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### Resources

- For tips on eating, dining out and shopping, watch our “Healthy Eating with Less Sodium” videos at [seattlechildrens.org/lowsodiumeating](http://seattlechildrens.org/lowsodiumeating).
- For recipe ideas see “Low Sodium Recipes” at [seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE1593.pdf](http://seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE1593.pdf).
- For healthy recipes for kids visit [eatright.org/kids](http://eatright.org/kids).
- Watch PCC Natural Markets Healthy Kids Cook Videos at PCC Community Market’s YouTube channel at [youtube.com/user/PCCNaturalMarkets](http://youtube.com/user/PCCNaturalMarkets).