

Sodium is an essential nutrient required for maintaining proper blood pressure in our bodies.

Most of the sodium we eat comes in the form of table salt (aka sodium chloride). Used to flavor foods and extend shelf life, **just one teaspoon of table salt is about 2,400 milligrams (mg) of sodium!**

Children and adults in the U.S. are eating **well above** the recommended amount of sodium per day.

Current Sodium Intake for Children

Males Age 2-19	Females Age 2-19
3,215 mg/day	2,639 mg/day

Source: [NHANES 2017-2018](#)

Recommended daily sodium amount:

Age 1-3	Age 4-8	Age 9-13	Age 14+
1,200 mg/day	1,500 mg/day	1,800 mg/day	2,300 mg/day

Source: [Dietary Guidelines 2020-2025](#)

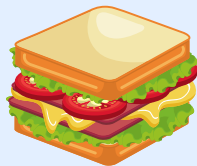
Risks of Excess Sodium

Most of the sodium children eat is found in salt added to processed or prepared foods.

Too much sodium can lead to health problems such as high blood pressure (hypertension) and obesity. One in 6 children have high blood pressure which is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke later in life

Top Sodium Sources

Processed snack foods
Deli meat
Burgers
Tacos
Pizza
Soup



Sodium in Children's Diets



Strategies to reduce sodium

1. Swap out high-sodium processed foods for lower-sodium options. Look for food labeled "Low Sodium" which contains <140 mg of sodium per serving.
2. Serve fresh fruits and vegetables which are low in sodium compared to processed versions.
3. Prepare food at home when possible or ask that no salt be added to your food when dining out.
4. Use herbs and spices when cooking instead of salt to reduce sodium and maintain flavor.
5. Reduce the amount of salt used in cooking slowly over time, letting your taste buds adjust.



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