

Reduce Sodium in School Meals



Currently, USDA does not have a guideline regarding limiting sodium in school meals. However, you should be working toward lowering the sodium content of school meals. USDA has included sodium reduction guidelines as part of the proposed meal pattern.

Too much salt and sodium are linked to high blood pressure. Reducing dietary sodium can lower blood pressure, which reduces the risk of heart disease, stroke, and kidney disease.

Nearly all Americans consume more sodium than they need.

The 2010 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend reducing daily sodium intake to less than 2,300 milligrams (mg). The guidelines recommend reducing sodium intake to 1,500 mg among persons who are 51 and older and those of any age who are African American or have hypertension, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease.

One teaspoon of salt equals about 2,300 milligrams (mg) of sodium.

Most of the sodium we consume is in the form of salt, and the vast majority of sodium we consume is in processed foods.

Read Nutrition Facts labels.

Foods that are low in sodium contain less than 140 milligrams (mg) per serving. Compare the sodium content of similar foods and choose products with the lowest amount of sodium per serving.

Serve more fresh foods.

Most fresh fruits and vegetables are naturally low in sodium.

Purchase low-sodium products when available.

Offer high-sodium foods less often.

Limit the use of:

- Salty, smoked or cured meat such as bologna, hot dogs, ham, luncheon meats, and sausage
- Salty snack items such as chips and pretzels
- Ready-to-eat canned foods such as soups, chili, and ravioli
- Food prepared in brine such as pickles, olives, and sauerkraut
- Food items made with cheese — try not to include too many items made with cheese over the course of a week
- Condiments — when possible, limit the portion size of condiments such as ketchup, mustard, barbecue sauce, and salad dressing

Modify recipes that use high-sodium ingredients.

- Reduce or eliminate salt from recipes when possible
- Limit the use of ingredients such as bouillon cubes, ham base, and chicken base
- Try different herbs and spices as seasonings in place of salt
- Emphasize that salt should not be added to recipes unless it is listed as an ingredient
- Salt can be eliminated from any recipe except a recipe that contains yeast

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 slice (28g)	
Servings per Container 18	
Amount per Serving	
Calories 80	Calories from Fat 30
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 3.5g	5%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 110mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 11g	4%
Dietary Fiber 1g	5%
Sugars 3g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 2%	Iron 6%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
	Calories 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g

Season Foods Without Salt

When using herbs, a little goes a long way. Use a small amount. Mix the food and then taste. When using dried herbs in a recipe that calls for fresh ones, use about 1/3 dried for the fresh herb amount.

Common Seasonings		
Seasoning	Foods to use it on	Tips
Basil	Pork, potatoes, vegetables, rice, bread, pasta	Basil has a sweet aroma and flavor. Basil is a great seasoning to use with tomato products.
Garlic, fresh or powder	Any meat, vegetables, soups, bread, rice	Use garlic powder, not garlic salt. Roasted garlic provides a mellow flavor.
Lemon, fresh or bottled lemon juice	Chicken, vegetables	Fresh lemon juice adds flavor that tastes like salt. Sprinkle on chicken. Add as a finisher to vegetables. Do not add lemon juice to vegetables while cooking since this will turn the color drab.
Onion, fresh or powder	Any meat, vegetables, soups, rice	Use onion powder, not onion salt.
Oregano	Pork, potatoes, rice, vegetables	Oregano is often used in sauces made with tomatoes and on pizza.
Parsley	Salad, light mayonnaise, rice dishes, meatballs, burgers, omelet, scrambled eggs, potatoes, cooked carrots, steamed peas, tomato sauces	Choose the familiar curly parsley or its more flavorful flat-leave Italian cousin to add a fresh taste.
Pepper, black or white	Any meat, vegetables, soups, rice	Use pungent white pepper during the cooking process rather than at the end of cooking.
Rosemary	Lentils, beans, stews, homemade breads, rolls, biscuits, hot cooked peas or green beans with garlic powder, ready-to-bake rolls brushed with olive oil and rosemary	Rosemary is a strong spice. Limit dried rosemary to one teaspoon per six servings (5 tablespoons for 100 servings).
Sage	Pork, turkey, grilled cheese sandwich, macaroni and cheese, vegetable soups	Try in small amounts when using for the first time.
Thyme	Bean dishes for stews and casseroles, any sauce for pasta, soups, tomato and olive oil salad, dough mixtures for breads and scones, baked chicken	Dried thyme has a medium intensity. Add no more than one or two teaspoons for six servings of a dish (2 to 5 tablespoons for 100 servings).

This fact sheet was adapted from: the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction fact sheet [Guide for Reducing Salt And Other Sodium Containing Additives in School Meals](#); USDA fact sheet [Season Your Foods Without Salt](#); and the [School Nutrition](#) August 2011 magazine article *Why Seasonings Are Worth Their "Salt."* MyPlate is the new food icon from USDA.

“The USDA and the State of Indiana are equal opportunity providers and employers.”