Reducing Sodium

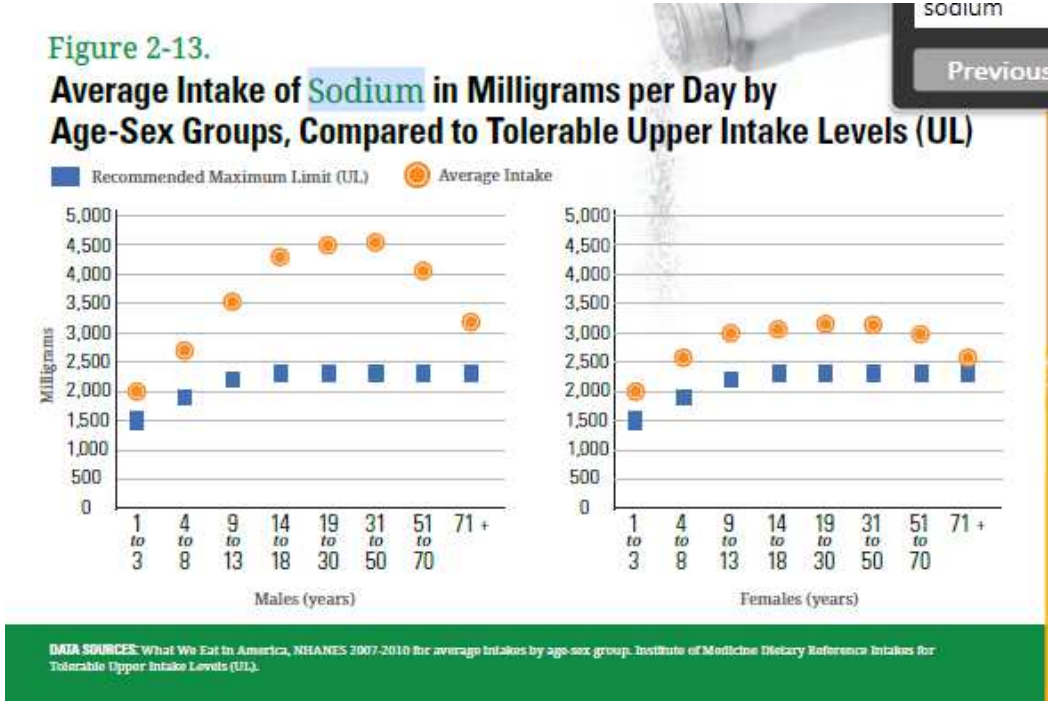
Erin Tefft, RD, LDN

Home Health Foundation

May 28, 2019

Why reduce sodium?

- Excess sodium intake increases risk for cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, stomach cancer.
- Reducing sodium intake may help control edema (i.e. COPD and cirrhosis).
- Average daily sodium intake in the United States is 3,440 mg

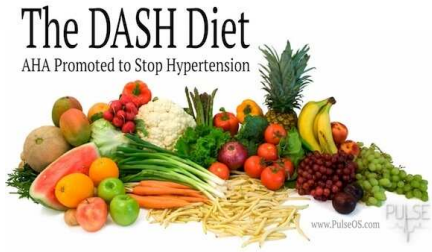


Current Guidelines

- Dietary Guidelines for Americans (2015-2020) recommends <2,300 mg sodium/day
- American Heart Association recommends 1,500 mg sodium/day for ideal heart health

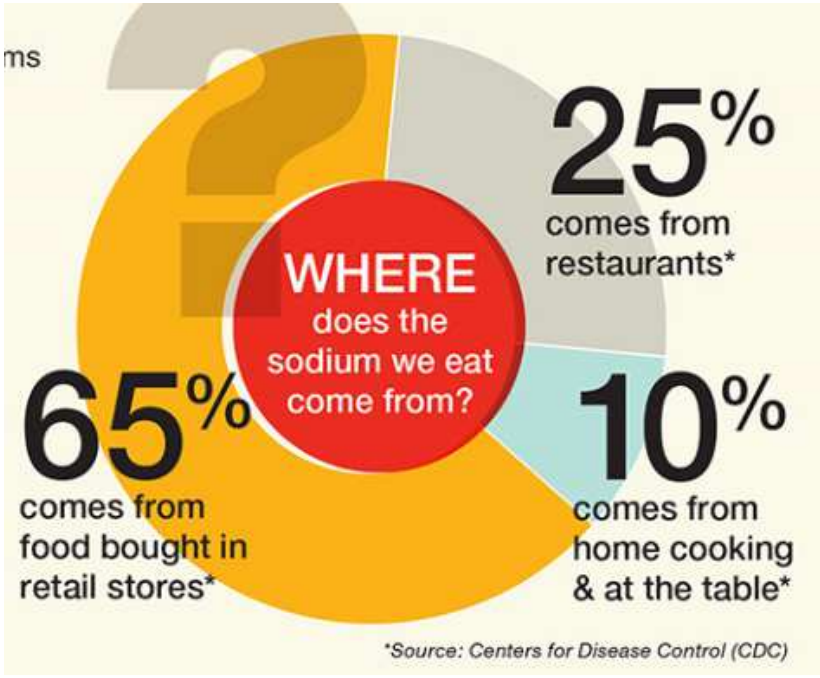
American Heart Association®

eat right.org
American Dietetic Association



Where is all of the salt coming from?

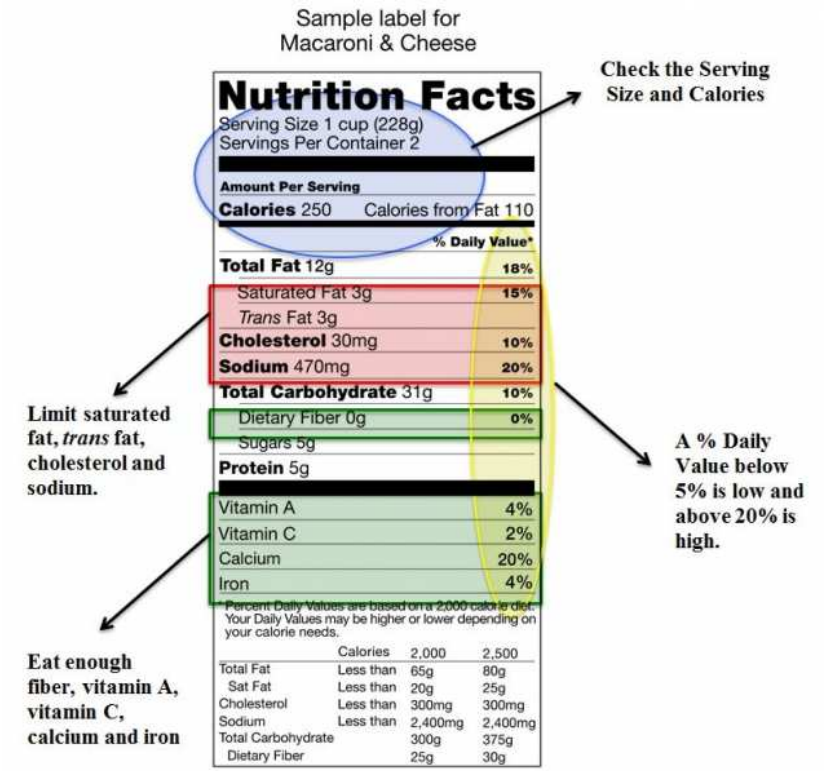
- Only a small proportion is from sodium inherent in foods or from salt added in home cooking or at the table.
- Most sodium consumed in the United States comes from salts added during commercial food processing and preparation.



How to Reduce Dietary Sodium

- Use the *Nutrition Facts* label to compare sodium content of foods
- Choose fresh, frozen (no sauce or seasoning), or no-salt-added canned vegetables.
- Choose fresh poultry, seafood, pork, and lean meat, rather than processed meat and poultry.
- Eat at home more; average entrée at top chain restaurants contains 1,500 mg of sodium.
- Limit sauces, mixes, and “instant” products, including flavored rice, instant noodles, and ready-made pasta

Nutrition Facts Label



- Check the serving size and servings per container
- Focus on milligrams of sodium
  - Aim for 140 mg or less
  - Limit foods with >300 mg
  - % Daily Value is based off of 2,400 mg/day

Tricky Food Labeling

Sodium-related terms you may see on food packages:

- **Sodium-free** – Less than 5 mg of sodium per serving
- **Very low sodium** – 35 mg or less per serving
- **Low sodium** – 140 mg or less per serving
- **Reduced (or less) sodium** – At least 25 percent less sodium per serving than the usual sodium level