

All About Sodium

Sodium's Role in Our Body

Sodium is a mineral that is necessary for life. It is regulated by the kidneys and helps control fluid balance. It also sends nerve impulses and affects our muscle function.

How Sodium Affects Our Heart

Too much sodium can put our hearts at risk. Extra sodium in our bloodstream pulls excess water into the blood vessels which increases the volume of blood and causes our blood pressure to increase. Over time this can damage the vessel walls and cause a build-up of mucky plaque which can block blood flow. This tires out the heart because it makes the heart work harder. Excess sodium can lead to the risk of high blood pressure, enlarged heart muscle, stroke, and heart failure.



How Much is Too Much

Other concerns with overconsumption of sodium are headaches, kidney disease, osteoporosis, kidney stones, and stomach cancer.

According to Heart and Stroke Canada, the recommended intake of sodium is 2.3g a day, roughly one teaspoon.

Approximately 77% of Canadians consume their salt intake from processed foods sold in grocery stores and restaurants. Buying fresh foods and cooking at home can help us cut down our salt intake.



Stock up your kitchen with a wide variety of colourful fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains like barley, bulgur, quinoa, brown rice, proteins like fish, chicken, eggs, and a variety of beans and nuts. Choose healthy oils such as olive, avocado, flaxseed, canola, and nut oils. Stock up your cupboards with spices and herbs to increase flavour instead of adding salt.

[*Salt and Sodium | The Nutrition Source | Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health](#)

[*Get the Scoop on Sodium and Salt | American Heart Association](#)