

Heart Disease is the #1 Killer of Women. Know Your Risks.

Newsletter 3
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Shake the Salt Habit

Did you know that on average, Americans eat more than 3,400 milligrams (mg) of sodium each day? Eating foods that are high in sodium can increase blood pressure and generally, the higher your salt intake, the higher your blood pressure.

The American Heart Association recommends limiting sodium as part of a heart healthy diet. Incorporating more fruits, vegetables and whole grains, including low-fat dairy products, poultry, fish and nuts, and limiting red meat, sweets and sugar-sweetened beverages are key to good heart health.

By eating fresh and less processed foods, it will help you limit not only the sodium you eat but also the saturated fat and trans fat you eat.

The American Heart Association recommends no more than 2,300 mg of sodium (one teaspoon) a day, and an ideal limit of no more than 1,500 mg per day.

Because the average American's sodium intake is so excessive, even cutting back to no more than 2,400 milligrams a day will significantly improve blood pressure and heart health.

More than 75 percent of the sodium Americans eat comes from some processed and prepackaged foods, not from the salt shaker. Many different sodium compounds are added to foods so you should watch for the words "soda" and "sodium" and the symbol "Na" on labels; these words show that sodium compounds are present.



Here are some tips to help you limit the amount of salt in your diet:

- Avoid adding salt, and canned vegetables with added salt to homemade dishes.
- Don't use salt during cooking.
- Learn to use spices and herbs to enhance the natural flavor of food.
- Don't salt food before you taste it; enjoy the natural taste of food.
- Take the salt shaker off the table.
- Follow the [D.A.S.H. eating plan](#).
- Select unsalted nuts or seeds, dried beans, peas and lentils.
- Select unsalted or low-sodium fat-free broths, bouillons or soups.

Consult with your physician before changing your diet or exercise plan.

Eating Out – Eating Healthy

[Eating out and eating healthy](#) is possible! Many restaurants offer delicious meals that are low in fats, cholesterol and sodium, or will prepare your food to order. Here are some things you can do to make sure your meal is healthier:

- Avoid ordering before the meal extras - cocktails, appetizers, bread and butter are high in calories and sodium.
- Ask for sauces and dressings on the side to control the quantity you use.
- Avoid foods that include broth, au jus, soy or teriyaki sauce.
- Avoid dishes with lots of cheese, sour cream and mayonnaise.
- Choose more fresh greens and use low-fat dressings.
- Ask if the chef can prepare food to order asking to limit butter, oils, sauces and cheese.

Spotlight in the Community

Community Health Resources launched its first EmPOWERED To Serve health lesson before a packed house on Dec. 15. The program was held in CHR's new outpatient building in Manchester and led by Joella Banker, LPN, from CHR's wellness program. The program, "Don't Go Breakin' Your Heart," focused on ways to improve heart health by reducing salt intake. The interactive presentation allowed the participants to share tips about shopping and cooking. Along with taking the pledge to reduce sodium, the participants received free health screenings and were introduced to the *Check. Change. Control.* Tracker and other ETS resources.