Low Sodium Diet

What is sodium?

Sodium is the main ingredient in table salt. It is also found in many foods and even in water. Our bodies need a small amount of sodium to work normally, but almost everyone eats too much. On average, Americans eat 3400 mg of sodium daily. Most people should have no more than 2300 mg daily. Some illnesses, such as heart failure and hypertension, recommend limiting sodium to 1500 mg daily.

Why should I reduce sodium in my diet?

- It can lower your blood pressure and reduce your risk of stroke, heart attack and kidney damage
- It can reduce the amount of fluid in your body, decreasing the work load on your heart
- It can keep your kidneys from working too hard
- It can reduce swelling in your ankles and belly
- It can reduce the chance of forming kidney stones
- It can help keep your bones strong

What are some foods that are high in sodium?

- Canned soups
- Rice and noodle mixes
- Sauces, dressings and condiments
- Pre-made frozen meals
- Deli meats, hot dogs and cheeses
- Smoked, cured or pickled foods
- Restaurant meals

How can I reduce the sodium in my diet?

- Do not add table salt when preparing or eating your meals
- Eat less processed foods
- Buy fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables instead of canned
- When you buy canned or proceed food, read the labels and choose ones that have less than 400 mg of sodium in each serving.
- Try low sodium or sodium free variations of the foods you like.
- Use other spices to increase the flavor of your food