SUBJECT: That sneaky salt!

The big problem isn’t the saltshaker. Nearly 80 percent of the salt we eat is already in processed and restaurant food when we buy it.

Some processed foods, such as salad dressings, tortillas and muffins, have a lot of sodium and don’t even taste salty. The salt is hidden.

We eat so much hidden salt that the average American eats more than twice the recommended daily maximum. High salt diets can increase the risk for high blood pressure, which can lead to heart disease and stroke.

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| **Common Ways of Consuming Too Much Sodium** | **Strategies to Reduce Sodium Consumption** |
| I eat a lot of my meals at restaurants. | * Ask for dressings and condiments on the side and use them lightly.
* Avoid the Salty 6: Bread & rolls, cold cuts & cured meats, pizza, poultry, soup, and sandwiches.
* Ask to see a copy of menu’s nutritional information.
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| I buy a lot of packaged, pre-made meals. | * Compare the amount of sodium in different brands. Look for low-sodium options.
* Drain and rinse canned foods. Choose frozen vegetables when possible.
* Verify the sodium on “diet” foods. They can be surprisingly high to overcompensate for removed fats and sugars.
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| I like to cook, and I like my food savory. | * Don’t add salt until you’re ready to serve the meal. A dash of salt on top at the end will give you a stronger savory flavor with less salt overall.
* Use herbs and spices in your cooking, your food will have a much deeper flavor.
* Use vinegar in place of salt when possible. Cook vegetables like cabbage in vinegar for a pickled flavor that is low in sodium.
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For more information on the Healthy Nutrition Guidelines project and the Choose Well – Live Well campaign, see [www.doh.wa.gov/choosewell-livewell](http://www.doh.wa.gov/choosewell-livewell).

[Wellness Coordinator name]



***Your health. Your food. Your choice.***