SPRINGFIELD CLINIC CARDIOLOGY

Shop Smart, Cook Smart

From the grocery aisles to your dinner table, here are some tips for reducing the amount of sodium that finds its way into your body.

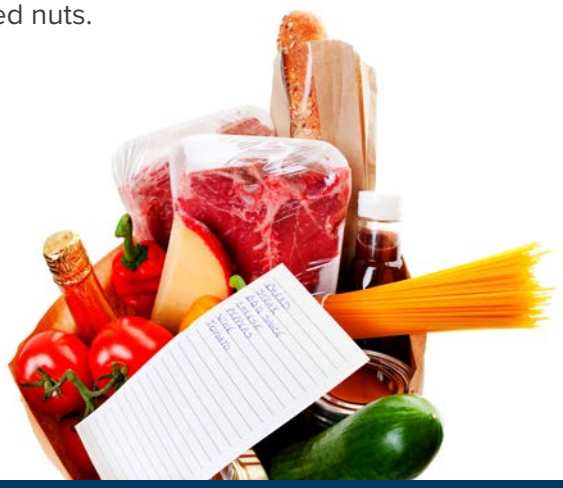
Avoid processed, prepared and pre-packaged foods.
Americans consume up to 75 percent of their sodium from these food sources. Examples include soups, tomato sauce, condiments, canned goods, preserved meats and prepared mixes.

Choose lower-sodium foods or low-sodium versions of your favorites.
Although it may take some time for your taste buds to adjust to a lower sodium diet, there are delicious options for very flavorful, low-sodium meals. Once the adjustment to healthier dining is made, many people report they would not choose to go back to the highly processed sodium-rich foods.

Read your food labels.
When buying pre-packaged foods, read the labels. Many different sodium compounds are added to foods, and they are listed on food labels. Watch for the words “soda” and “sodium” and the symbol “Na” on labels, which warn you that these products contain sodium compounds. Many canned and frozen food labels help the consumer by printing “low-salt” or “low-sodium” boldly on the packaging.

Eat more fruits and vegetables.
When buying canned or frozen varieties, be sure to choose the no-salt-added versions, and look for the choices without added sauces.

Use fruit and raw vegetables as snacks.
These are a heart-healthy alternative to chips and salted nuts.



Select unsalted nuts or seeds, dried beans, peas and lentils.

Select unsalted or low-sodium fat-free broths, bouillons or soups.

Avoid adding salt and canned vegetables with added salt to homemade dishes.

Don’t use salt during cooking.
Certain salt substitutes contain a large amount of potassium and very little sodium. They are not expensive and may be used freely by most people, except those with kidney disease. Talk with your health care professional about whether a salt substitute is right for you.

Learn to use spices and herbs to enhance the natural flavor of food.
Ditch salt for healthier, delicious salt-free seasoning alternatives.

Don’t salt food before you taste it; enjoy the natural taste of food.

Take the salt shaker off the table.
Adding more salt at the table adds to your daily sodium intake without adding much to the flavor of your food.

Eat less salted potato and corn chips, lunch meat, hot dogs, salt pork, ham hocks, dill pickles and many canned foods.
All of these foods have a lot of salt.

SOURCE: American Heart Association

Springfield clinic

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