

Sodium

What is sodium? It is a mineral found naturally in food.

Why do we need it? Our bodies need sodium to maintain fluid balance, control blood pressure, keep our nerves working, and help our muscles relax.

How much do we need?

- 500 milligrams (mg) of sodium ($\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of salt) per day
- 1 teaspoon of salt has 2,000 mg of sodium
- Keep your sodium below 2,300 mg ($1 \frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon of salt) per day



How can you control your sodium intake?

- Read the Nutrition Facts Label to look for sodium.
- Food that is pre-packaged or processed (food that comes in cans, boxes, or packages) is higher in sodium. Try to buy foods lower in sodium or that have “No Added Salt”.
- Try to avoid adding salt while cooking and at the table.
- Always taste your food before adding salt.
- Season your food with herbs, spices, salt-free seasoning, vinegar, or lemon juice instead of salt.



Some people are very sensitive to sodium; their blood pressure may go up with added salt and salty foods. These individuals should be careful not to have too much sodium.

