



# DR. JANET'S SODIUM FACT SHEET

## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SODIUM AND SALT?

- Salt is a compound that causes water retention and contains two minerals: sodium and chloride. It is the sodium that has negative health effects when consumed in excess (which most Americans do).
- Salt is 40% sodium, 60% chloride.

## WHY CUT BACK ON SALT?

- It can help prevent and treat high blood pressure...a disease which greatly increases your risk of getting a heart attack, a stroke (the #1 and #3 leading causes of death in this country) and kidney disease.
- One in three adult Americans has high blood pressure.

## HOW MUCH SODIUM (AND SALT) SHOULD WE BE EATING?

According to both the American Heart Association and the USDA 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans:

- Americans should consume less than 2,300 mg (approximately 1 teaspoon of salt) of sodium per day and choose and prepare foods with little salt.
- Middle-aged /older adults or those with diagnosed high blood pressure should eat < 1,500 mg/day.
- The average American consumes about twice the recommended sodium limit (~4000 to 6000 mg/day)
- The fact is that most Americans would benefit their health by reducing their sodium intake.
- Your body only really needs about 200 mg of sodium every day for proper functioning.

## SALT

- The average American eats ~6-10 grams of salt per day.
- The USDA dietary guidelines suggest consuming less than 6 grams salt/day (about a heaping teaspoon of salt) for maintaining good health.

## SHAKE THE SALT HABIT FOR BETTER HEALTH! (SODIUM...THE NEW TRANS FAT)

- Consider using other seasoning alternatives like Mrs. Dash.
- A great way to tame those taste buds and shake the salt habit is to replace salt with alternative seasonings, herbs and spices, hot sauces and fruit juices to enhance the flavor of food.

## LABEL READING - WHAT TO LOOK FOR ON THE NUTRITION FACTS PANEL TO MAKE MORE HEALTHFUL FOOD CHOICES

- The great majority of sodium in our diets comes from processed foods and restaurant food.
- Choose whole, unprocessed foods when possible; use alternative seasonings; read the nutrition facts panel on foods you purchase.
- Be aware that foods high in sodium don't always taste salty (for example, a salty tasting small bag of fries at McDonalds® has 160 mg sodium whereas a 10 piece chicken McNuggets® has 1000 mg).
- On the label: "Low sodium" = 140 mg sodium or less per serving.