



Sodium

The **% DV for Sodium** displays the quantity of sodium included in a serving. The percentage daily value is based on a maximum daily intake of 2,300mg although Health Canada recommends that most Canadians need only 1500mg of sodium a day. Compare and choose foods to get less than 100% DV of this nutrient each day.

According to the World health Organization, diets higher in sodium are associated with an increased risk of developing high blood pressure, which can raise the risk of heart attacks, heart failure, stroke, kidney disease, and blindness.

What It Is

The words "salt" and "sodium" are often used interchangeably, but they do not mean the same thing. Salt (also known by its chemical name, sodium chloride) is a crystal-like compound that is abundant in nature. Sodium is a **mineral** and one of the **chemical elements found in salt**.

Where It Is Found

Many everyday foods are not obviously salty but they contain high amounts of "hidden salt." Over 75% of dietary sodium comes from eating **packaged and prepared** foods, whereas only a small portion actually comes from salt added to food when cooking and eating.

Sodium can be found hiding in commercially processed or prepared foods such as:

- Breads and rolls
- Breakfast Cereals
- Pizza
- Sandwiches (such as hamburgers, hot dogs, and submarine sandwiches)
- Cold cuts and cured meats (such as deli and packaged ham and turkey)
- Soups
- Burritos and tacos
- Snack foods (such as chips, crackers, microwave popcorn, and pretzels)
- Chicken (includes processed chicken)
- Cheese (includes processed cheese)
- Egg dishes and omelets

Nutrition Facts

Valeur nutritive
Per 1 cup (250 mL)
pour 1 tasse (250 mL)

Calories 110	% Daily Value*
Fat / Lipides 0 g	0 %
Saturated / saturés 0 g	0 %
+ Trans / trans 0 g	
Carbohydrate / Glucides 26 g	
Fibre / Fibres 0 g	0 %
Sugars / Sucres 22 g	22 %
Protein / Protéines 2 g	
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg	
Sodium 0 mg	0 %
Potassium 450 mg	10 %
Calcium 30 mg	2 %
Iron / Fer 0 mg	0 %

*5% or less is a **little**, 15% or more is a **lot**
*5% ou moins c'est **peu**, 15% ou plus c'est **beaucoup**

Sodium is a nutrient to get less of.

What It Does

- Our body tissues are made up of a vast number of cells of different shapes, sizes and functions and all of these cells require enough salt to function properly.
- Sodium plays a vital role in transporting water around the body (fluid balance) and in transmitting messages between the brain and the rest of the body for muscle contraction and other nervous system functioning.
- As a food ingredient, sodium has multiple uses, such as in curing meat, baking, thickening, retaining moisture, enhancing flavor (including the flavor of other ingredients), and as a preservative.

Health Facts

- Most Canadians exceed the recommended limits for sodium in the diet. On average, Canadians eat about 3,400 milligrams (mg) of sodium per day. This is more than double the amount we need!
- According to the *World Health Organization*, diets higher in sodium are associated with an **increased risk of developing high blood pressure** (also known as hypertension), a condition in which blood pressure remains elevated over time. High blood pressure makes the heart work harder, and the high force of the blood flow can harm arteries and organs, such as the heart, brain, kidneys, and eyes. Uncontrolled high blood pressure can raise the risk of heart attacks, heart failure, stroke, kidney disease, and blindness.
- Health Canada recommends that most Canadians consume **1500 milligrams (mg)** per day and not exceed 2300 mg per day, which is the equivalent of just over one teaspoon of salt.

✓ Action Steps

For Reducing Sodium in Your Diet

Use the **Nutrition Facts** label as a tool for reducing consumption of sodium. The Nutrition Facts label on food and beverage packages shows the amount in milligrams (mg) and the % Daily Value (%DV) of sodium per serving of the food.

The Daily Value for sodium is less than 2,300 mg per day.

- Compare and choose foods to get less than 100% DV of sodium each day. And remember:
 - 5% DV or less of sodium per serving is considered low
 - 15% DV or more of sodium per serving is considered high
- Look for light, low sodium, reduced sodium, or no-salt-added versions of packaged foods.
- Prepare your own food when you can and limit packaged sauces and flavored products (such as rice and pasta mixes and instant noodles).
- Flavor foods with herbs and spices and no-salt seasoning blends instead of adding salt to foods when cooking, baking, and eating.
- Choose fresh meats, poultry, and seafood, rather than processed varieties. Also, check the package on fresh meats and poultry to see if salt water or saline has been added.
- Buy fresh, frozen (no sauce or seasoning), low sodium, or no-salt-added canned vegetables.
- Rinse sodium-containing canned foods, such as beans, tuna, and vegetables before eating.
- Try light or reduced sodium condiments, add oil and vinegar to salads rather than bottled dressings, and use only a small amount of seasoning from flavoring packets instead of the entire packet.
- Choose low sodium or no-salt-added nuts, seeds, and snack foods (such as chips and pretzels)—or have carrot or celery sticks instead.
- Consume smaller portions of foods and beverages that are higher in sodium or consume them less often.
- When eating out, ask that your meal be prepared without salt and request that sauces and salad dressings be served “on the side,” then use less of them. You can also ask if nutrition information is available and then choose options that are lower in sodium.