

WORLD SALT AWARENESS WEEK: 21 - 27 MARCH, 2011

WATCH OUT FOR SALT TOO MUCH IS BAD FOR YOUR HEALTH

Excess dietary salt (sodium chloride) has been linked with a number of diseases such as high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, osteoporosis, stomach cancer, obesity and asthma. Blood pressure increases progressively with increased sodium intake and a reduction in sodium intake lowers blood pressure (WHO 2003, NHMRC 2006).

Australian dietary guidelines suggest a dietary target of four grams of salt per day and an upper daily intake of six grams, however the average salt intake in the Australian population is seven to ten grams per day. Therefore there is a need for a significant reduction in intakes. Lower salt intakes will lead to major reductions in both incidence of, and deaths from Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) i.e. stroke, heart failure and heart attacks, and a major reduction in the disability that results from CVD.

Did you know that most salt we eat is added to the food before we buy it? 75% of the salt we ingest is from processed food.

Here are some tips for cutting down on salt:

- Eat home-cooked meals using fresh food rather than takeaways and processed foods when possible
- Get out of the habit of adding salt when cooking and at the table.
- Check product labels and choose those products with less salt (<120mg/100g)
- Go easy on the prepared sauces and choose a low salt option
- Swap high-salt foods such as pies and sausages for lean meat or fish
- Foods which are cured, smoked or pickled tend to be high in salt
- Choose tinned vegetables, pulses and fish that say 'no added salt'
- Use herbs, spices, chilli, pepper and lemon to add flavour instead of salt
- Keep some healthy snacks to hand, such as fruit or unsalted nuts
- Don't be fooled; sea salt and rock salt are just as bad for you as table salt

More information

www.worldactiononsalt.com

www.health.act.gov.au