

News Column for week of [September 23, 2019](#)

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### Watching Your Sodium Intake? - Beware of the “Salty Six”

In the January issue of the Tufts University Health & Nutrition Letter, one of the articles highlighted the top six sources of sodium in [today's](#) American diet, and it's not just French fries and potato chips according to the American Heart Association. The American Heart Association introduced the “Salty Six” to increase awareness of 6 common foods that may be loaded with excess sodium. According to the heart experts, the “Salty Six” are:

Bread and rolls – One slice of bread or roll can contain as much as 230 milligrams of sodium.

Cold cuts and cured meats – Deli or pre-packaged turkey can have as much as 1,050 milligrams.

Pizza – One slice can contain up to 760 milligrams.

Poultry – Choose your chicken wisely, avoiding products enhanced with a sodium solution. Just 3 ounces of fast-food-style nuggets can contain almost 600 milligrams of sodium.

Soup – One cup of canned chicken noodle soup can have up to 940 milligrams of sodium.

Sandwiches – A sandwich can easily top 1,500 milligrams of sodium.

It's clear that Americans have developed quite a taste for salt, but we know that salt plays a role in high blood pressure. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that everyone, including kids, should reduce their sodium intake to less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium a day – or about 1 teaspoon of salt. Adults age 51 and older, African Americans of any age, and persons with high blood pressure, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease should further reduce their sodium intake to 1,500 mg a day.

Learning to enjoy flavorful foods without all the sodium may take a little practice, and require you to adjust your taste buds, but it can be done! Begin by cutting back on salt little by little – pay attention to the natural tastes of various foods. Before you know it, your taste for salt will lessen.

Cooking at home is a great place to start because you are the one in control of what's in your food. Skip the salt when cooking. Use herbs, spices, garlic, vinegar, no-salt seasoning mixes, pepper, or lemon juice to season foods. Pay attention to condiments you might add to recipes, however. Foods like soy sauce, ketchup, pickles, olives, salad dressings and some seasoning packets are high in sodium. Choose low-sodium options whenever you can. Cooking without salt certainly does not mean cooking without flavor! Don't be afraid to experiment and be creative!

Other ways to consume less sodium include filling up on fresh and frozen vegetables and fruits – they are naturally low in sodium. Fresh foods of all kinds are generally lower in sodium. In fact, most of the sodium Americans eat is found in processed foods, so eat them less often and in smaller portions. Finally, read the Nutrition Facts label to find packaged and canned foods that are lower in sodium. Look

for foods labeled as “low sodium,” “reduced sodium,” or “no salt added.” When using canned vegetables, draining, rinsing and re-heating the vegetables in water can significantly reduce the sodium.

Watching out for the “Salty Six” and using the tips above can help reduce sodium intake. For more information about this or other foods and nutrition topics, contact Kathy in the Southwind Extension District’s Iola office at 620-365-2242 or by email at [kmcewan@ksu.edu](mailto:kmcewan@ksu.edu).