

# SODIUM / SALT

## What is the difference between salt and sodium?

Salt is comprised of sodium chloride (NaCl) - of which around 40% is sodium, the main element within salt that negatively affects our health.

## How much sodium should I have in a day?



Our **UPPER** limit for sodium intake per day is 2300mg. That is equivalent to just 1 teaspoon of salt a day (5g). Realistically we only need 1-2 grams a day – that's a pinch of salt!!

## Where else do I get sodium?

Not all our sodium comes from the salt shaker, in fact the salt that we use at the table, or in our cooking, only accounts for about 15% of our daily sodium intake, a further 75% comes in pre-packaged or processed foods, and a further 10% of sodium is found naturally in foods. Foods such as bread, processed meat, ready-made sauces, pre-prepared foods such as soup and canned goods, dairy products and breakfast cereals can be high in sodium.



## What are the negative health effects of too much sodium?

Too much sodium in the diet can lead to an increase in blood pressure. High blood pressure, which is often referred to as 'The Silent Killer' has no visible symptoms, and can lead to an unexpected stroke or heart attack. Water retention and kidney stones are also linked to too much sodium.

## Why does our body need sodium?

Sodium, chloride and potassium (collectively known as electrolytes) are necessary to transmit nerve impulses. Generally most people are having too much sodium and disrupting the electrolyte balance and that can lead to dehydration and excessive urination.

## How do I reduce my salt / sodium intake?

Choose products with the National Heart Foundation tick – this means there is a lowered amount, or acceptable amount, of sodium in that food item; don't add salt at the table or during cooking; reduce salt by experimenting with different flavours such as herbs and spices; change to a low salt alternative, and eat mostly fresh unprocessed foods. You can change your salt threshold by **gradually** reducing the amount you add to food – your housemates/partner won't even know you're doing it.

**Read labels when buying food and choose products with the least amount of sodium per 100g.**