

Reduced Salt Diet for Children

This leaflet should only be used in conjunction with advice from your Paediatric Dietitian. Information is correct at time of writing

Too much salt in the diet may lead to raised blood pressure and can cause the body to retain too much fluid. Your child may be asked to follow a reduced salt diet if they have been diagnosed with Nephrotic Syndrome, a kidney disorder which causes too much protein to be passed into the urine and your kidneys to retain salt, causing fluid retention.

Salt is often 'hidden' within foods; so even if you don't add salt to your food at the table, you may still have a high overall salt intake from your diet.

Please see the table below for recommendations on maximum daily salt intake for children of different ages. You may see salt content written on food labels as either 'salt' or 'sodium'. To convert sodium to salt you need to multiply the sodium figure by 2.5. Aim for foods with under 1.2g salt (0.5g sodium) per 100g.

Child's age	Maximum salt intake per day	Equivalent as sodium
Under 1 year	1g	0.4g
1-3 years	2g	0.8g
4-6 years	3g	1.2g
7-10 years	5g	2g
11 years and over	6g	2.4g

Tips for reducing salt in your child's diet:

- Cook using fresh ingredients wherever possible
- Avoid using ready-prepared meals/sauces as they often have lots of salt added to them
- Takeaway foods tend to also be very high in salt – try making your own versions of your favourite takeaways at home
- Avoid adding salt into foods when cooking or baking
- Do not add salt to meals at the table
- Avoid 'Lo Salt' or other salt substitutes as they are high in potassium

Use the following tables to make everyday food swaps which will help to reduce your child's salt intake:

Food	Lower salt option	High salt option to avoid
Meats	All fresh meats (sold from the fridge or frozen) Homemade pies and pasties	Tinned meats such as corned beef, ham and meatballs Bacon, sausages, gammon, meat pies/pasties, meat paste, pate, other processed meats such as burgers and chicken nuggets
Fish	All fresh fish (sold from the fridge or frozen) Tinned fish in oil or water such as tuna or mackerel	Tinned fish in brine Smoked fish such as smoked haddock and smoked salmon Prawns Fish paste
Milk and dairy products	Fresh or UHT milk, yogurt and fromage frais, cream, unsalted butter, margarine	Salted butter
Eggs	Fresh eggs	Scotch eggs
Cheese	Cream cheese, cottage cheese, ricotta, quark	All hard cheeses such as cheddar and red leicester Cheese spreads

Food	Lower salt option	High salt option to avoid
Potatoes and Vegetables	Chips/wedges/roast potatoes/mash made from fresh potatoes Fresh and frozen vegetables Unsalted tinned vegetables Any fresh salad items – eg lettuce, cucumber, tomato, peppers Small portions of reduced salt baked beans	Processed potato products - eg potato waffles, croquettes, smiley faces, alphabites Tinned vegetables in salted water Standard baked beans
Fruit	All fresh or frozen fruits	-
Bread, Cereal, Rice and Pasta	Bread – limit intake as bread does contain added salt Low salt breakfast cereals – eg porridge, puffed wheat Freshly cooked rice and pasta	Higher salt breakfast cereals – eg cornflakes, rice krispies Savoury rice mixes Tinned spaghetti, instant flavoured noodles, pasta and sauce packet mixes
Cakes, Biscuits and Puddings	Cakes, sweet biscuits and puddings – to be eaten in moderation Cream crackers, water biscuits	Savoury salted biscuits or cheese-flavoured biscuits
Drinks	Water, squash, fruit juice, smoothies, malted drinks, hot chocolate	Oxo/Bovril

Food	Lower salt option	High salt option to avoid
Soups and sauces	Homemade soup Small portions of standard gravy Mayonnaise/Reduced salt ketchup Low salt stock cubes - eg Boots baby organic stock cubes, Kallo very low salt organic stock cubes, Oxo reduced salt stock pots	Tinned and packet soups Salad cream, ketchup, brown sauce, BBQ sauce, soy sauce Standard stock cubes Ready-made cook in sauces, eg sweet & sour, curry or pasta sauces
Snacks, Spreads and other food items	Homemade stuffing Unsalted crisps, eg Smiths 'Salt n Shake' – discard salt packet Unsalted nuts/mixed unsalted nuts with dried fruit (avoid in children under 5 years) Jam, marmalade, honey, syrup, chocolate – to be eaten in moderation Dried fruit, sweet popcorn	Stuffing packet mixes Standard crisps, poppadums, bombay mix Dry roasted or salted nuts Olives Peanut butter, yeast extract spread Salted popcorn

Alternative seasonings

When you begin to reduce the salt in your child's diet, food may taste different at first; however our taste buds very soon adapt to lower levels of salt. Reducing the salt in cooking doesn't mean food will taste bland - there are lots of alternative flavourings for foods which you can try in place of salt:

- Herbs such as parsley, mint, rosemary, thyme and chives
- Spices such as curry powder, paprika, mixed spice, cinnamon and ginger
- Fresh white/red/spring onions and fresh garlic
- Garlic granules
- Lemon juice, lime juice, orange juice, vinegar, mustard, black pepper

Note: avoid celery salt, garlic salt and onion salt, 'season all', fajita seasoning and 'jerk' seasoning.

Useful Resources/Contact Details

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-types/salt-in-your-diet>

<https://nstrust.co.uk/> - nephrotic syndrome trust

For further information please contact the Paediatric Dietitians on 0121 424 1674.

Accessibility

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