7 SALTY MYTHS

**1. Eliminate sodium completely for good health**

Sodium is an essential nutrient that controls blood pressure and is needed to make nerves and muscles work properly, but you need the right amount. [Institute of Medicine. 2004. Dietary Reference Intakes for Water, Potassium, Sodium, Chloride, and Sulfate. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.]

**4. High levels of sodium are found only in food**

Some over-the-counter medications contain high levels of sodium. Carefully read drug labels, and remember that some companies produce low-sodium, over-the-counter products. [Rx]

**2. Sea salt has less sodium than table salt**

Sea salt has boomed in popularity, but it usually isn’t any less salty. Just like table salt, it typically contains 40% sodium. [Institute of Medicine. 2010. Strategies to Reduce Sodium Intake in the United States. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.]

**5. Lower sodium foods have no taste**

There is a rich world of creative and flavorful alternatives to salt. Experiment with spices, herbs, and citrus to enhance the natural flavor of your food.

**3. I usually don’t salt my food, so I don’t eat too much sodium**

More than 75% of sodium Americans consume is estimated to come from processed foods — not the salt shaker. [Nutrition Facts]

**6. My blood pressure is normal, so I don’t need to worry about how much sodium I eat**

The American Heart Association recommends consuming less than 1500 mg daily.

Even for people who don’t have high blood pressure, less sodium will significantly blunt the rise in blood pressure that occurs as we age and will also reduce the risk developing other conditions, such as kidney disease, associated with eating too much sodium. [Appel LJ, Palmer ST, Moy CS, Conlin PR, Carnes BA, Sacks FM, Smith JC, Vollmer WM. Nat Heart. Circulat 2011;123:1136-1143.]

**7. I don’t eat a lot of salty food so I don’t eat too much sodium**

Watch out for:

- Poultry
- Cheese
- Bread


heart.org/sodium