

Fact sheet

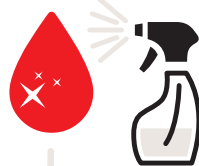
Salt and your Kidneys



Your kidneys play a very important role to keep you healthy. They are responsible for a number of jobs including:



Regulates Blood Pressure



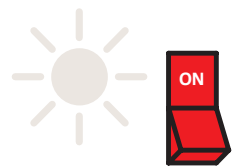
Cleans Blood



Filters Waste and Toxins



Balances Water



Activates Vitamin D

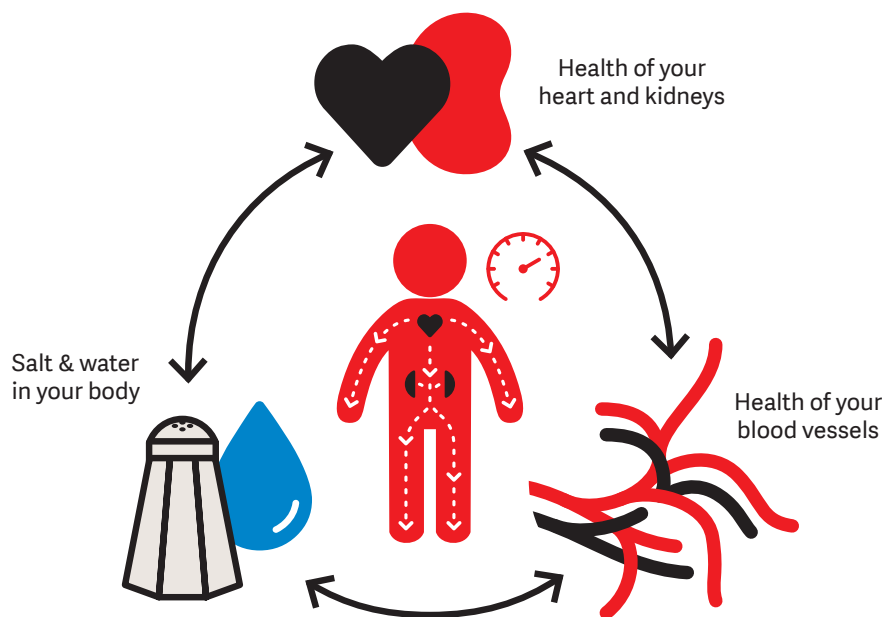
How does salt affect your health?

You have probably heard that eating too much salt is bad for your health, including your kidneys. This is because salt contains sodium, and too much sodium is not a good thing.

Sodium is important for controlling your blood pressure, but you need the right amount. Too much sodium can increase your blood pressure, and this is bad for your heart AND your kidneys.

If you have chronic kidney disease (CKD), your kidneys can not remove excess salt and fluid so they build up in your body and can cause:

- High blood pressure
- Swelling of ankles, feet, hands, and puffiness under your eyes
- Shortness of breath

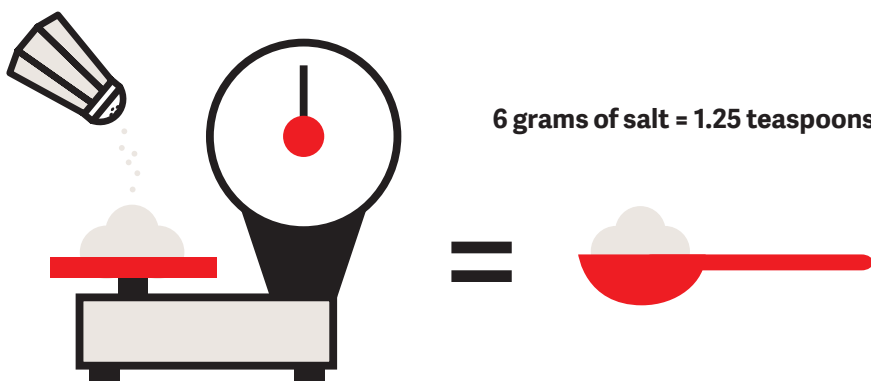


Salt in our food

Salt was originally added to our food as a preservative before most of us had a fridge in our home.

Our taste buds have become used to foods with added salt, and most of us eat more than we should.

The maximum amount of salt an adult should eat each day is 6 grams. This is equal to just over one teaspoon of salt.



Some simple ways to reduce salt in your diet

- Most processed foods are higher in salt. Convenience means that many of us end up eating less fresh foods which are important for a healthy diet.
- Cereals and bread are popular foods that can contain higher levels of salt so check the label.
- Cook your own meals from whole foods rather than buying processed whenever you can.
- Eat only small amounts of high salt foods.
- Check the ingredients list for hidden salts – see below for more information.

Use more herbs and spices

You can train your tastebuds to enjoy foods with less salt. Adding herbs and spices to fresh foods are a good way to add flavour without the salt.

Try some of these to give your food flavour:

- Herbs like basil, coriander
- Spices like chilli, pepper, paprika, ginger
- Lemongrass
- Garlic
- Lemon or lime juice and zest
- Onions
- Vinegar
- Mustard

Try to reduce salt slowly and your taste buds will get used to less salt in your food. You may eventually find some foods too salty!

You can find some links to healthy recipes at the end of this sheet.

Learn to read labels and choose lower salt options

Look for sodium on food labels and compare similar products. Look for “No-added-salt, salt reduced or low salt” versions of products. Always look at the per 100g column as serving sizes will vary.

NUTRITION INFORMATION		
Servings per package: 3		
Serving size: 150g		
	Quantity per Serving	Quantity per 100g
Energy	608 kJ	405 kJ
Protein	4.2 g	2.8 g
Fat, Total	7.4 g	4.9 g
- saturated	4.5 g	3.0 g
Carbohydrate, total	18.6 g	12.4 g
- sugars	18.6 g	12.4 g
Sodium	90 mg	60 mg
Calcium	300 mg (38%)	200 mg
<small>* Percentage of recommended dietary intake</small>		
Ingredients: Whole milk, concentrated skim milk, sugar, strawberries (9%), gelatine, culture, thickener (1442)		

Check the ingredients list - if added salt is in the first three ingredients this food may not be the best choice.

Look for hidden salt in the ingredients list

These all contain sodium:

- Rock salt
- Sea salt
- Seasonings
- Onion, garlic, celery or chicken salt
- Meat or yeast extract
- Baking powder
- Monosodium glutamate (MSG)
- Anything containing the word sodium including sodium bicarbonate

This food contains 60mg sodium per 100g, making it a low salt food.

Best	Okay	Poor
Less than 120mg	120–400mg	More than 400mg

Health Star Rating



Some packaged foods also include the Health Star Rating on the front of the packet.

- The more stars, the healthier the choice when compared to a similar food.
- It is useful to compare the same food types, for example cheese against another type of cheese.
- It is not useful to compare different food types, for example cheese and cereal.

More information on food labels can be found at www.eatforhealth.gov.au/eating-well/how-understand-food-labels.

Remember, the Health Star rating only applies to packaged foods. Don't forget fresh food (fruit, vegetables, nuts, lentils, fresh meat and fish) is usually the healthiest option!



This health star rating shows that this food contains 645mg sodium per 100g. A low salt product has less than 120mg of sodium. This is not a low salt product.



Common salt myths

Some salts are advertised as having special health benefits from the minerals they contain. These include sea salt and Himalayan salt. These salts contain as much sodium as regular salt. The amounts of minerals present in these salts very small, and can be easily found in a wide range of other healthy foods.



Putting it all together

- Eat fresh foods like fruit, vegetables, legumes, and wholegrain bread and rice
- Drink plenty of water
- Eat some lean meat, such as chicken and fish
- Cut back on snack foods with high levels of saturated fat, sugar or salt. Healthy alternatives include fresh fruit, low-fat yoghurt (check for added sugar) and unsalted nuts
- Look for no added salt, salt reduced or low salt products
- Use only small amounts of salty sauces
- Use food labels to choose the lowest salt products



Recipe ideas

- The DASH diet recipes - DASH stands for "Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension."
www.dashdietoregon.org/resources
- Dietitians Association of Australia Recipes - www.daa.asn.au/smart-eating-for-you/smart-eating-recipes
- Eat for Health - Tips for eating well
www.eatforhealth.gov.au/eating-well/tips-eating-well
- Kidney Health Australia resources: "Back on the menu: Low potassium recipe" and "Dining In: Dialysis Recipes and Meals". These recipes are suitable for all people, not just kidney consumers. Available to order and download from the Resources Library at our website www.kidney.org.au/about-us/resources-library/booksandpublications



Download a phone app to help you shop

If you have a smartphone you can download the free FoodSwitch app. It can help you find out what is in the food you're eating and suggest simple, healthier switches. You can use your phone camera to scan the bar code on the packet. See more information. here: www.bupa.com.au/health-and-wellness/tools-and-apps/mobile-apps/foodswitch-app



Where you can go for more help?

Managing what you eat when you have kidney disease can be a challenge, and your needs will probably change over time.

For expert advice on nutrition and diet, you can contact an Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD). Renal dietitians specialise in kidney health. To find one, visit www.daa.asn.au or call 1800 812 942.

For more information about healthy eating refer to the Australian Dietary Guidelines at www.eatforhealth.gov.au



THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Salt contains sodium, and too much sodium is not good for your kidney or heart health.
- Salt is hidden in a lot of packaged foods so it is important to read the nutrition label and look at the Health Star rating.
- If you swap high salt foods for low salt alternatives you can train your taste buds to accept less salt.

For more information about kidney or urinary health, please contact our free call Kidney Health Information Service (KHIS) on 1800 454 363.

Or visit our website kidney.org.au to access free health literature.

This is intended as a general introduction to this topic and is not meant to substitute for your doctor's or healthcare professional's advice. All care is taken to ensure that the information is relevant to the reader and applicable to each state in Australia. It should be noted that Kidney Health Australia recognises that each person's experience is individual and that variations do occur in treatment and management due to personal circumstances, the healthcare professional and the state one lives in. Should you require further information always consult your doctor or healthcare professional.



If you have a **hearing or speech impairment**, contact the National Relay Service on **1800 555 677** or **relayservice.com.au**

For all types of services ask for 1800 454 363