

# SODIUM



## New Requirements

School Food Authorities will reduce sodium by approximately 25–50 percent in breakfasts and lunches over a 10-year period.

## Foundations

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) recommend consuming less than 2,300 mg of sodium (approximately 1 teaspoon of salt) per day. Many students eat nearly double the daily recommended amount.

School Food Authorities should begin reducing sodium incrementally with a long-term plan for meeting the DGAs' recommendation.

Nearly all Americans consume more sodium than they need. A taste for salt is a learned habit. Reducing dietary sodium can lower blood pressure, which reduc-

es the risk of heart disease, stroke, and kidney disease. By gradually reducing the salt and sodium in school meals, students' tastes can change.

## What is Sodium?

Salt is sodium chloride. Food labels list sodium rather than salt content. Processed foods are high in sodium, contributing 75 percent of sodium to the American diet. Table salt is not the only source of sodium. Keep an eye out for other ingredients that contain sodium such as monosodium glutamate (MSG), baking soda, baking powder, disodium phosphate, sodium alginate, and sodium nitrate or nitrite.

*Many students eat nearly double the daily recommended amount of salt.*

### Menu Tips

- Cut back on high sodium foods gradually to give students' taste buds time to adjust.
- Introduce lower sodium versions of popular menu items and recipes at the beginning of a school year.
- Serve more fresh foods and fewer processed foods. Processed foods, such as canned vegetables, soups, luncheon meats, and frozen entrees, are often high in sodium.
- Be aware of the sodium content of condiments. Some condiments, such as soy sauce and ketchup, can be high in sodium.
- Talk to food vendors and make product comparisons. Order lower sodium versions when purchasing popular processed foods.



## Using USDA Foods

USDA Foods Program offers only low-sodium, canned vegetables. Schools may also order frozen vegetables as a lower sodium option. USDA Foods has also reduced the sodium limit on mozzarella, processed and blended cheeses.

## Recipe Ideas

- Offer high-sodium foods less often. Go easy on pre-prepared, processed entrees and side dishes, such as pizza, chicken nuggets, and hot dogs. Use grilled chicken breast instead of luncheon meat, bacon, sausage, or ham.
- Modify recipes that use high-sodium ingredients such as cheese sauces, canned soups, tomato sauce, paste, or spaghetti sauce, canned vegetables, chips, and taco shells. Use lower sodium versions or use less of these items. Remove salt from recipes whenever possible. (Note: Do not leave salt out when preparing baked goods because it could affect the baking process.)
- Find recipes that use fresh or dried herbs, spices, lemon or orange zest, or fruit juices to intensify flavors in foods without adding sodium.

# Water

## New Requirements

Water must be made available to all students during the meal service.

Other beverages such as flavored waters may be considered foods of minimal nutritional value and, if so, are not allowed to be served during meal times in competition with other more nutritious beverages.

*Water should be available as an extra beverage, but is not to take the place of milk or fruit juice, which provides nutrients.*

## Foundations

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend choosing and preparing foods and beverages with little added sugar or calorie sweeteners.

Milk, 100% fruit juice and water are all beverages that meet these dietary guidelines.

