



Sodium

If you are living with heart failure, one of the most important things you can do to avoid retaining extra fluid is reduce the amount of sodium (salt) in your diet.

The first step to reducing sodium in your diet is to remove the saltshaker from your table. You should not add any extra salt to your food.

Most processed foods contain a lot of sodium. Learning how to read and understand food labels is an important skill.



What is sodium?

Sodium is a mineral found in salt. One teaspoon of salt equals approximately 2,300 mg of sodium. Two-thirds of the salt in the Canadian diet is hidden in food.

Sodium causes extra fluid to build up in your body, making your heart work harder. This extra fluid can also accumulate in your legs and ankles, as well as in your lungs, making it difficult to breathe.

What is a low sodium diet?

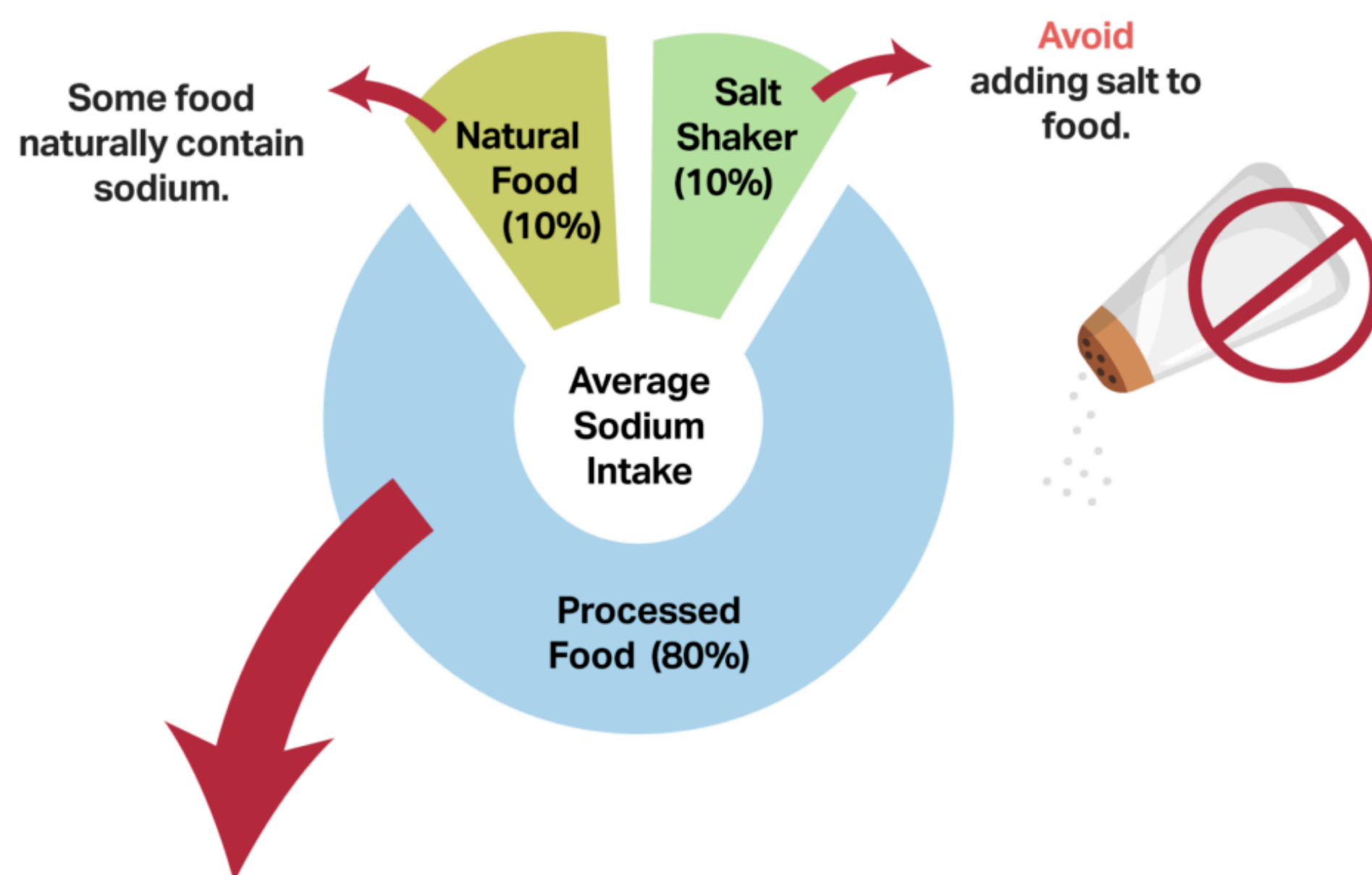
It is best to limit the amount of sodium you eat to less than 2,000 mg day. This will help prevent the accumulation of extra fluid in your body.



Reducing your sodium

Of all the salt in our diet, approximately 10% comes from sodium found naturally in foods, 10% comes from salt that is added by us at the table, and 80% comes from food processing.

Where does sodium in our diet come from?



Calculating Sodium Intake (Read Nutrition Facts!)

Following a Low Sodium Diet

Low Sodium Diet
= 2000mg/day



1 teaspoon of salt
= 2300mg



Aim to eat less than 2000mg of sodium/per day



For more information, visit ourhearthub.ca

Reading nutrition labels

It is important to learn how to read the Nutrition Facts panel on food packaging, as these labels can help us determine the sodium content of foods. Food manufacturers may change ingredients over time, so you should make it a habit to regularly revisit nutritional labels.

What should I pay attention to in food labels?

Avoid eating processed foods but if you can't, read the 'Nutrition Facts' label to calculate the amount of sodium.

1. Read the **serving size**. Some packages contain multiple servings.

2. Read the amount of **sodium per serving**. Choose products that are less than **200mg/serving**.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container about 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Proteins 5g	
Vitamin A	4%

Read Ingredients Lists

INGREDIENTS: Sardines, Water, Tomato Paste (Water, Tomato), Pepper, Sugar, Salt, Monosodium Glutamate (MSG), Soybean Oil, Xanthan Gum, Guar Gum.

3. Avoid products where salt or some of its other forms are high up on the list.

Serving Size:

Compare the suggested serving size on the package to the amount that you actually eat – this can sometimes be very different. The label lists the amount of sodium in one serving, not the total amount of sodium in the entire package.

Sodium:

Look at the amount of sodium in mg per serving. Try to choose products with less than 200mg per serving or 10% or less of the Daily Value per serving.

Ingredients:

Ingredients are listed in decreasing order by amount. If an ingredient appears earlier in the list, that means there is more of it in the food. If salt or sodium appears in the ingredients list, make sure that it is near the end. Sometimes the salt can be 'hidden' – look out for these ingredients: sodium, monosodium glutamate (MSG), brine, sodium nitrite, sodium propionate, baking soda, and baking powder.

For more information, visit ourhearthub.ca



How can I reduce sodium in my diet?

- Avoid using salt in your cooking and remove the saltshaker from your table.
- Buy fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables and prepare your meals at home.
- Avoid salted snack foods, such as chips, crackers, and nuts.
- Choose foods labeled low sodium or no salt added.
- Read food labels to see how much sodium is in each serving.
- Avoid processed foods:
 - Canned or packaged soups
 - Instant foods like oatmeal or puddings
 - Processed cheese slices or spreads
 - Processed, cured, or smoked meats like sausages, wieners, ham, bacon, or smoked fish
 - Canned vegetables, meats, and fish
 - Canned tomato and vegetable juices
 - Frozen dinners and entrees
- When grocery shopping, try to do most of your shopping in the outer aisles where most of the fresh products are found. Avoid the inner aisles, where the more processed foods are shelved.
- Plan your meals ahead of time.
- Grill an extra chicken breast to use for a sandwich the next day.
- Season foods with lemon juice, vinegar, fresh garlic, herbs, and spices.
- Don't use spices that contain salt or sodium, like garlic salt or onion salt
- Avoid using salt substitutes like No Salt® and Half Salt®.
- Seasoning herb blends which are best to use include Mrs. Dash, President's Choice no salt added seasoning blends, David's Condiments™ salt free products, McCormick's® salt-free products, and Club House® La Grill salt free seasonings.
- Make salad dressing with fresh garlic, olive oil, and flavoured vinegar.
- Search online for low sodium recipes.
- Try a new low sodium cookbook.

Helpful resources include [Canada's Food Guide](#) and [unlockfood.ca](#)

For more information, visit [ourhearthub.ca](#)

