



8TH GRADE | INFORMATIONAL TEXT ARTICLE

Choosing Healthy Snacks

Soon you'll be starting high school. It's an exciting time. Things are not the same as they used to be. You have more independence, but also more responsibilities at school and home. You also make more decisions on your own about what and when to eat. You get to listen to your body and explore your own taste preferences. You probably already know what foods and beverages are your favorites.

By now, you probably choose the types of foods you eat and drinks you have between meals.¹ These seemingly simple choices can make a big difference in how you feel and your health. Think about the kinds of foods you snack on. Do you choose snacks like candy and cookies? Or do you reach for healthier options like whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean proteins, fruits, or vegetables?

Changing Snack Patterns

Kids today are snacking a lot more than kids did in the 1970s. The amount of daily calories kids consume from snacks has increased almost 200 calories since then.³ You would have to walk for about 1½ hours to burn off this many calories.

It's important to choose snacks that will provide your body with the nutrients to move and play without too many extra calories from **added sugars** and **saturated fat**.

Vocabulary Words are in bold and underlined.



In the late 1970s, American children consumed an average of only one snack a day. Today, kids snack about three times a day.²



How long will it take you to use up calories from extra snacks?

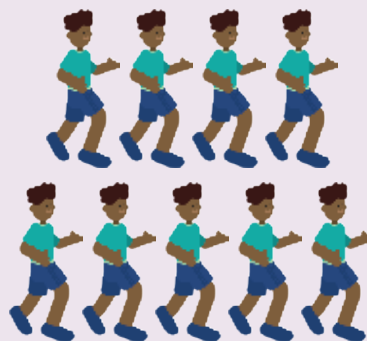
It takes 1 hour and 30 minutes to burn off 200 calories from consuming extra snacks.²

EXTRA SNACKS
200 CALS



= 10 MINS

=



=

AMOUNT OF TIME WALKING
1 HOUR 30 MINS
TO BURN OFF EXTRA CALORIES

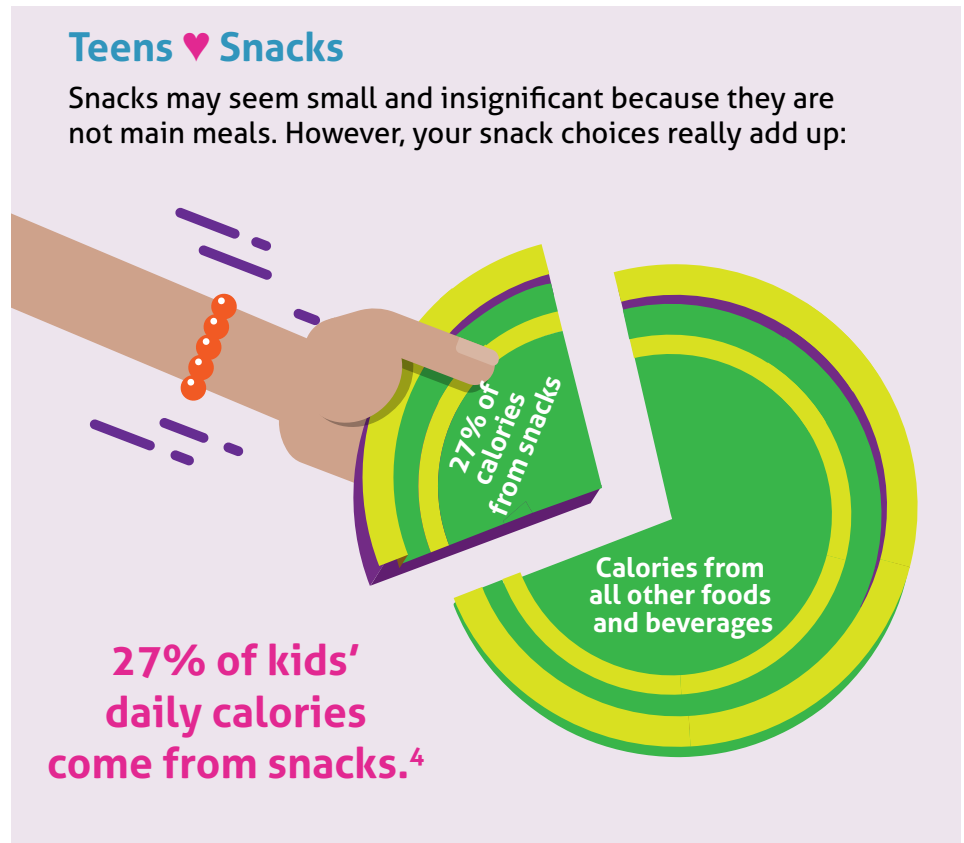
1. "Trends in Snacking Among U.S. Children." Health affairs (Project Hope) 29.3 (2010): 398–404. PMC. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2837536/>.

2. "Trends in Snacking Among U.S. Children." Health affairs (Project Hope) 29.3 (2010): 398–404. PMC. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2837536/>.

3. Estimates based on average weights of children ages 12–14. Those who weigh more than average will burn more calories. Those who weigh less than average will burn fewer calories. Calculations based on walking speed of 3 miles per hour. Source: Wang, Hsiao, Orleans, Gortmaker; 2013.

The Impact of Our Snacking Choices

Our snack choices matter and can help us establish a healthy eating pattern for life. A healthy eating pattern limits saturated fat, added sugars, **refined grains**, and **sodium**, which are often found in snack foods that many middle school students choose. Eating too many unhealthy snacks with saturated fat, added sugars, refined grains, and sodium can have consequences. Choosing healthier snacks can help you create an eating pattern that is associated with positive health outcomes including reduced risk of obesity, heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, and some cancers.



Snack Choices Add Up

Make sure you pay attention to what snacks you're choosing. The extra calories from added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium can really add up through the day.

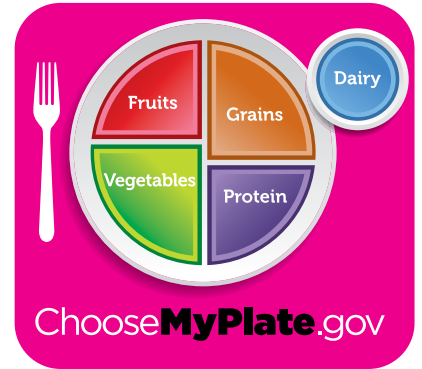
Comparing Snack Choices

SNACK A		calories	added sugars (grams)	saturated fat (grams)	sodium (milligrams)
1 bag of potato chips (1 ounce)		152	0g	1g	126 mg
1 package of cookies (1 ounce)		397	25g	6g	249 mg
TOTAL →		549	50g	7g	365 mg
SNACK B		calories	added sugars (grams)	saturated fat (grams)	sodium (milligrams)
½ cup carrot sticks with 2 tbsps hummus		25	0g	0g	42 mg
1 medium banana		53	0g	0g	73 mg
TOTAL →		78	0g	0g	115 mg

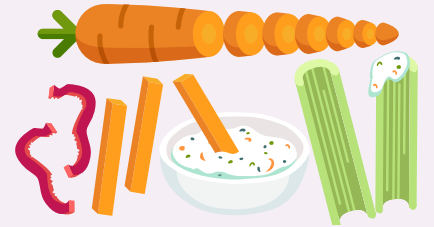
4. Trends in Snacking Among U.S. Children." Health affairs (Project Hope) 29.3 (2010): 398–404. PMC. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2837536/>.

Five Ways to Snack Healthy

You can use MyPlate as a guide to help you choose snacks that are part of a healthy eating pattern. MyPlate illustrates the five food groups (Dairy, Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, and Protein Foods) that are the building blocks for a healthy diet using a familiar image — a place setting for a meal. Here are some tips for choosing snacks that are part of a healthy eating pattern.

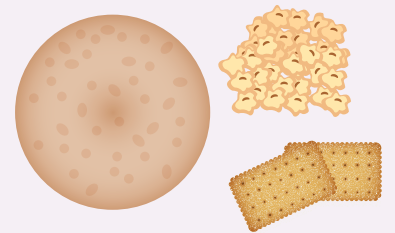


1 Plan ahead. Make a plan so you can steer clear of cookies, pastries, and candies, which contain lots of added sugars. You can save time by slicing up vegetables so they're ready when hunger strikes. Store sliced vegetables in the refrigerator and eat with dips like hummus or low-calorie dressing.



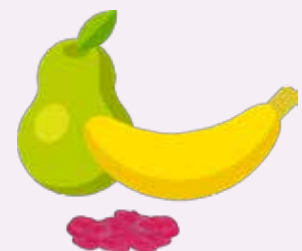
2 Drink smart. Grab a glass of milk. A cup of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk or milk alternative like calcium-fortified soy milk is an easy and healthy snack. Milk is high in calcium which helps keep your bones and teeth strong. Or try seltzer water with a splash of 100% fruit juice instead of soda.

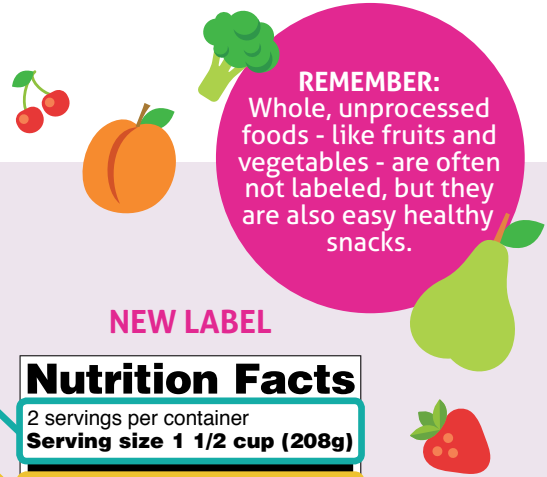
3 Go for great whole grains. Steer clear of snacks with refined grains like cake and cookies. Instead, choose popcorn, whole wheat crackers, or whole-grain tortillas. These snacks are high in fiber which can help you feel fuller longer than refined grain foods.



4 Nibble on lean protein. Choose lean protein foods such as hummus or unsalted nuts to fuel your day. Try dipping apple slices in peanut butter, or carrot sticks in bean dip. A little protein with your snack can help you feel fuller longer.

5 Consider convenience. Fresh, frozen, dried, or canned fruits can be easy “grab-and-go” options that need little preparation. Enjoy a pear, grab a handful of dried cranberries, or slice up a banana to satisfy your cravings.





Comparing Snack Options

Food labels tell you the nutritional content of a food. You may already use the Nutrition Facts label in some way – maybe to check calories. But, the more familiar you are with the information, the more you’ll want to use it daily to ensure you’re eating a healthy, balanced diet.

By July 2018, there will be a new Nutrition Facts label on all foods. This will make it easier to identify Calories, Serving Size, Saturated Fat, Sodium, Added Sugars, and Nutrients. Look below to see how to read both the current and new labels.

OLD LABEL

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%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:	
	Calories: 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Saturated Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g

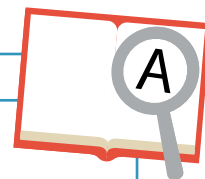
NEW LABEL

Nutrition Facts	
2 servings per container	
Serving size 1 1/2 cup (208g)	
Amount per serving	
Calories 240	
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 4g	5%
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 5mg	2%
Sodium 430mg	19%
Total Carbohydrate 46g	17%
Dietary Fiber 7g 25%	
Total Sugars 4g	
Includes 2g Added Sugars 4%	
Protein 11g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 6mg	35%
Potassium 240mg	6%
* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

Conclusion

Snacks are a big part of your day, so plan them wisely! You can feel good, grow, and stay healthy by using MyPlate as a guide to choose your snacks.

VOCABULARY



Added Sugars: Sugars and syrups that are added to foods or beverages when they are processed or prepared.

Refined Grains: Grains that contain only the endosperm because they have been milled, which removes the bran and germ, and important nutrients. Examples of refined grains include white flour, white bread, and white rice.

Saturated Fat: Fat that is usually solid at room temperature. Most often found in animal products such as beef, pork, and chicken.

Sodium: A mineral generally present in the form of salt (sodium) that your body needs in small amounts to work properly. However, when consumed in excessive amounts, sodium can raise the risk of high blood pressure (hypertension).



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Sodium and Your Health

Vocabulary Words are in **bold** and underlined.

11	2
Na	8
Sodium	1
22.98976928	

Preserving Our Food

Early humans were typically **nomadic**, traveling from place to place rather than settling. They often only hunted and gathered enough food for each day. However, once people began creating settlements and farming the land, they began to experiment with ways to **preserve** their food over longer periods of time. Preserving the food they grew and harvested allowed humans to farm during the warmer months and still have enough food to survive the winter.

The element **sodium** (Na) has always played an important role in food preservation. When combined with other elements like chloride (Cl), nitrogen (N), or oxygen (O), sodium helps prevent food from spoiling quickly and reduces the growth of dangerous bacteria. People most commonly associate sodium with table salt, or sodium chloride (NaCl). However, you may be surprised to learn that much of the sodium in our food comes from food processing and not from the salt shaker.

Sodium is added to some packaged foods during processing such as in **curing meat**, baking, thickening, enhancing flavor, as a preservative, or to keep foods moist. It can be found in many foods, from potato chips to breakfast cereal to hot dogs to soups.

Our bodies need small amounts of sodium to work properly, but ingesting too much can lead to health problems. Sodium is an essential nutrient that helps with the function of nerves and muscles. It also helps to keep the right balance of fluids in your body.

However, most of us get a lot more sodium than we need which can cause health problems like high blood pressure (hypertension).

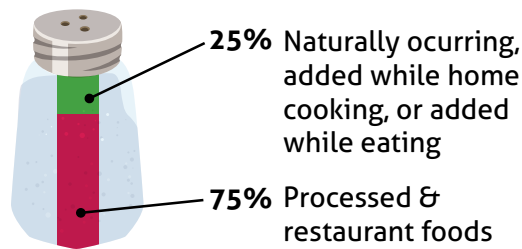


Where is Sodium Found?

While it is important to be aware of how much salt you add to your food, most of the sodium you consume is already in your food by the time it is on your plate.

Only a small proportion of total sodium intake — just 25% — is from sodium naturally present in foods or from table salt added while cooking or at the table¹.

Sources of Sodium Intake

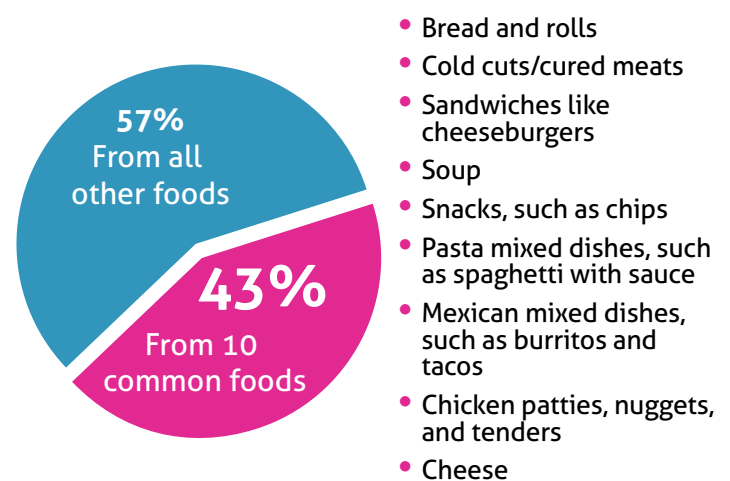


Most sodium consumed in the United States comes from salts added during the commercial food processing and preparation of packaged and restaurant foods, such as burgers, sandwiches, and tacos; rice, pasta, and grain dishes; pizza; meat, poultry, and seafood dishes; and soups.

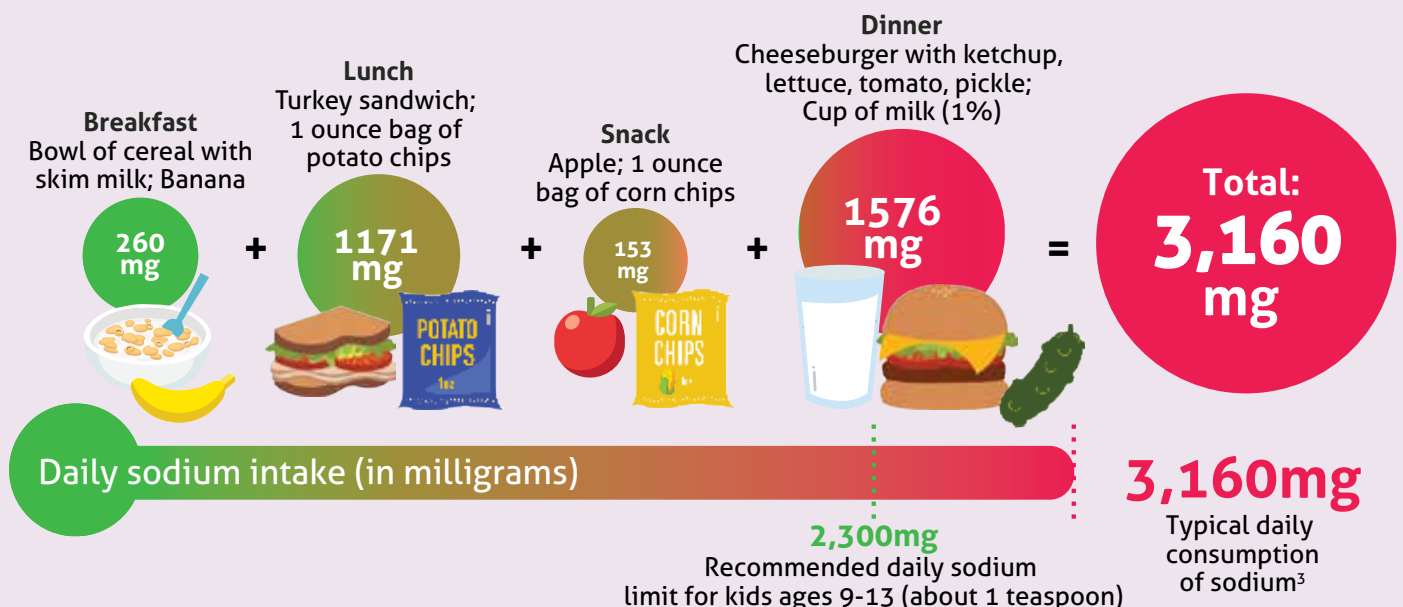
Top Sources of Sodium in Kids' Diets

- Kids ages 6 to 18 eat about 15% of sodium at breakfast, 30% at lunch, 39% at dinner, and 16% at snacks. Snacks alone account for a lot of kids' sodium intake. Remember, foods can be high in sodium even if they don't taste salty.
- About 43% of sodium eaten by kids comes from just 10 common food types²:

Top Sources of Sodium



Sodium Adds Up Quickly. Not all foods are high in sodium. But when you combine foods of varying levels as part of your daily diet, sodium can add up quickly.



1. "Get the Facts: Sodium and Dietary Guidelines." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. April 2016. https://www.cdc.gov/salt/pdfs/Sodium_Dietary_Guidelines.pdf.
 2. "Reducing Sodium in Children's Diets." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Chronic Disease Control and Health Promotion, Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention, 09 Sept. 2014. <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/children-sodium/>.
 3. For kids ages 9-13.

How Does Sodium Affect Your Body?

Sometimes when we eat certain foods, we can feel their impact on our body right away. For example, drinking a lot of soda might make you burp a few seconds later, and eating a lot of potato chips might make you very thirsty. Some of the effects of consuming too much sodium can take much longer to show up, but they are still very serious. It can be strange to think about what your life will be like in 5 or 10 or 20 years when you're not even sure what your plans are for this weekend.

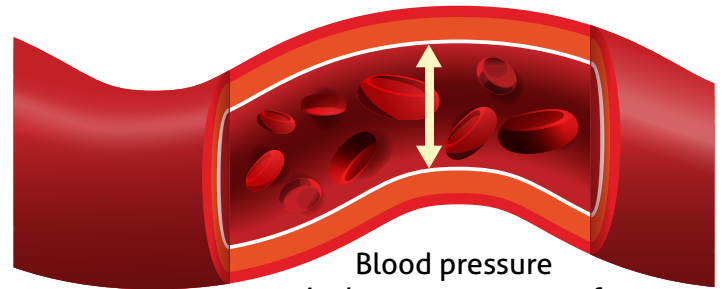
Most American children ages 6-18 consume too much sodium, an average of about 3,300mg of sodium per day. This is 1,000mg over the daily recommended limit of 2,300mg. On average, as sodium intake increases, the risk of developing high blood pressure also increases.⁴

Your blood needs a certain amount of pressure to move through your blood vessels and bring oxygen and nutrients to all of your organs.

Making lower sodium choices now can help you stay healthy and active for the rest of your life.

However, if that pressure increases too much, it can put stress on your blood vessels and make it harder for your heart to pump blood where it needs to go. This is a condition known as high blood pressure, or hypertension.

Over the long term, hypertension can increase the risk of heart attack, stroke, heart failure, vision loss, and kidney disease later in life. The effects of high blood pressure (hypertension) may develop slowly, but they can be very serious. Although these problems take years to develop, it's important to start thinking about them now.



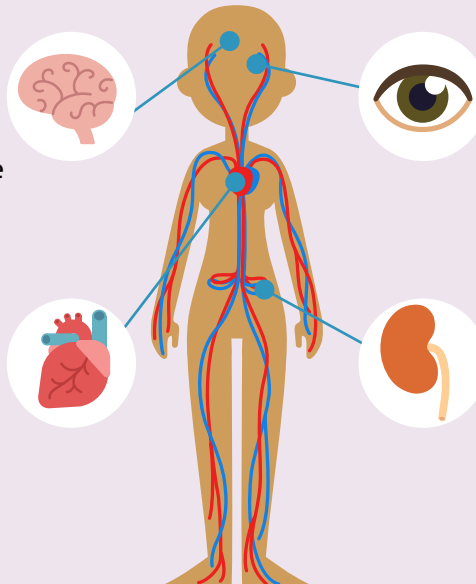
Blood pressure is the measurement of force applied to artery walls.

Consequences of High Blood Pressure

Over time, high blood pressure can damage your body and lead to illness or even death.

STROKE

High blood pressure can damage your blood vessels and cause them to clog or burst. High blood pressure makes you 4-6 times more likely to have a stroke.⁴



VISION LOSS

High blood pressure can strain the blood vessels in the eyes and result in blindness.

HEART ATTACK

High blood pressure can result in blocked blood vessels. 69% of people who have a first heart attack have high blood pressure.⁵

KIDNEY DISEASE OR FAILURE

The kidneys' job is filter your blood. High blood pressure can damage blood vessels near your kidneys and make it harder for them to do their job.

4. "Reducing Sodium in Children's Diets." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Chronic Disease Control and Health Promotion, Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention, 09 Sept. 2014. <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/children-sodium/>.

5. "High Blood Pressure and Stroke." National Stroke Association. 2016. <https://www.stroke.org/sites/default/files/resources/NSA_BloodPressure_brochure.pdf>.

6 "Statistical Fact Sheet: High Blood Pressure." American Heart Association. 2013. <https://www.heart.org/idc/groups/heart-public/@wcm/@sop/@smd/documents/downloadable/ucm_319587.pdf>.

Picking Low-Sodium Foods

Sodium is present in many foods, but you know what to look for, choosing lower sodium options can be easy!

Skip higher sodium fast food meals and prepare foods at home so you can control the amount of salt and the ingredients that go into your food. Use lemon juice and salt-free herbs and spices, like garlic and pepper, to flavor your food instead of sauces and prepackaged seasonings.

Choose unsalted, lower sodium, or lightly salted snack foods instead of regular versions.

Use the Nutrition Facts label to compare the sodium content in foods and choose products with less sodium. Look for foods that have less than 200 milligrams of sodium per serving.

Conclusion

Choosing lower sodium foods is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Sodium is added to all kinds of foods, so it's important to know how to choose low-sodium options. Reducing sodium consumption may help you live a healthier life for many years to come.

IMAGES TO COME

Popcorn (popped in oil and buttered)

Nutrition Facts	
1 servings per container	
Serving size	2 cups (208g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	151
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 9g	19%
Saturated Fat 4g	19%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 200mg	9%
Total Carbohydrate 16g	12%
Dietary Fiber 3g	11%
Total Sugars 1g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 2g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 6mg	1%
Iron 1mg	3%
Potassium 121mg	3%

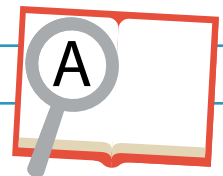
* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Popcorn (air-popped, no butter or oil added)

Nutrition Facts	
1 servings per container	
Serving size	2 cups (208g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	62
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 1g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 1mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 12g	10%
Dietary Fiber 2g	9%
Total Sugars 0g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 2g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 1mg	0%
Iron 1mg	3%
Potassium 53mg	1%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

VOCABULARY



Curing Meat: The process of preserving meat, which often includes adding sodium. Examples of cured meat are salami, sausage, and jerky.

Nomadic: Roaming about from place to place.

Preserve: To prevent food from spoiling.

Sodium: A mineral generally present in the form of salt (sodium) that your body needs in small amounts to work properly. However, when consumed in excessive amounts, sodium can raise the risk of high blood pressure (hypertension).

