



## Are you getting too much SALT?

Sodium;  
 Monosodium  
 Glutamate;  
 Sodium Benzoate;  
 Sodium Bicarbonate;  
 Sodium Citrate;  
 Sodium Nitrite;  
 Sodium Acid  
 Pyrophosphate

NOVEMBER 2017 ISSUE

The average Canadian consumes approximately 3400 mg of salt (sodium chloride) per day. This amount is more than double the recommended intake for Canadians.

by Manitoba Consumer Monitor Food Panel

The majority of salt in the diet of Canadians comes from processed food products. These foods are sold with a promise of convenience such as, bakery products, frozen pizzas, deli luncheon meats, canned soups, canned vegetables and packaged breakfast cereals.

These processed food options account for 77% of Canadians total sodium intake. Naturally occurring sodium accounts for 12% of the salt we eat. Salt added at the table accounts for 6% and salt added while cooking contributes to 5% intake. Concluding, 88% of all the sodium in the diet is added during food manufacturing or preparation and is not present naturally in the foods Canadians are eating. (Health Canada, 2012)

In response to the apparent situation regarding overconsumption of salt, the Sodium Working Group (SWG) was developed in 2007 with a mandate to develop a population-health strategy to reduce sodium in the diets of Canadians. The SWG released a Sodium Reduction Strategy report in July 2010 (Nutrition Evaluation Division,

2012) that propelled the Canadian Health Ministers in September of 2010 to agree to work towards lowering the average sodium intake of Canadians to 2300 mg per day by 2016. (Health Canada, 2012)

A cross-sectional analysis study was conducted of Canadian packaged foods in 2010 and 2013. Food categories were created and covered a vast market representation of processed foods, results showed sodium levels had significantly decreased by 16.2%, increased by 1.9% and 81.9% of food categories had no change in sodium levels in food products. (JoAnne Arcand, 2016)

The greatest reductions in sodium in packaged food products seen in this study were in “meat and meat substitutes (60.9% to 46.2%), canned vegetables and legumes (28.7% to 21.5%), breakfast cereals (14.6% to 9.0%), and bakery products (24.3% to 19.6%).” (JoAnne Arcand, 2016)

Consuming foods that are high in salt have been directly linked to elevated blood pressure, a risk factor for death worldwide that is known to be preventable through monitoring ones diet.

High blood pressure is the major cause of cardiovascular disease and a risk factor for stroke and kidney disease. (JoAnne Arcand, 2016) Evidence suggests a diet high in salt can contribute to osteoporosis, stomach cancer, kidney disease, renal stones and obesity. (Queen Mary, University of London)

Achieving improvements to the health of Canadians is evident in reducing added sodium in processing however; a reduction in salt intake would be highly cost-effective.

A reduction in salt intake would prevent 23,500 cardiovascular disease events per year. The suggested decrease of salt in the diets of Canadians from its current average 3,400 mg to the recommended 2,300 mg per day would decrease events of cardiovascular disease by 13% and could save health care \$949 million annually. (Health Canada, 2012)

A voluntary approach applied by the Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments of encouraging food manufacturers to reduce sodium in their processing of products and include the reduction of sodium into guidelines, policies and procedures has had a minimal outcome.

Minimal incentives by governments have been implemented in making improvements to lower sodium present in packaged and processed foods by manufacturers. Results from the MCM Food Panel show that the majority of Manitobans are able to understand current labeling and are aware of health impacts of consuming high sodium over time. There is room for much more improvement in reducing sodium in the marketplace. The majority of Manitobans hold themselves accountable for reducing sodium in their diets. This can be attributed to being self-aware in their diet choice. Meanwhile, more than half view this as the Federal Governments responsibility and nearly three-quarters feel the issue should be handled by food manufacturers.

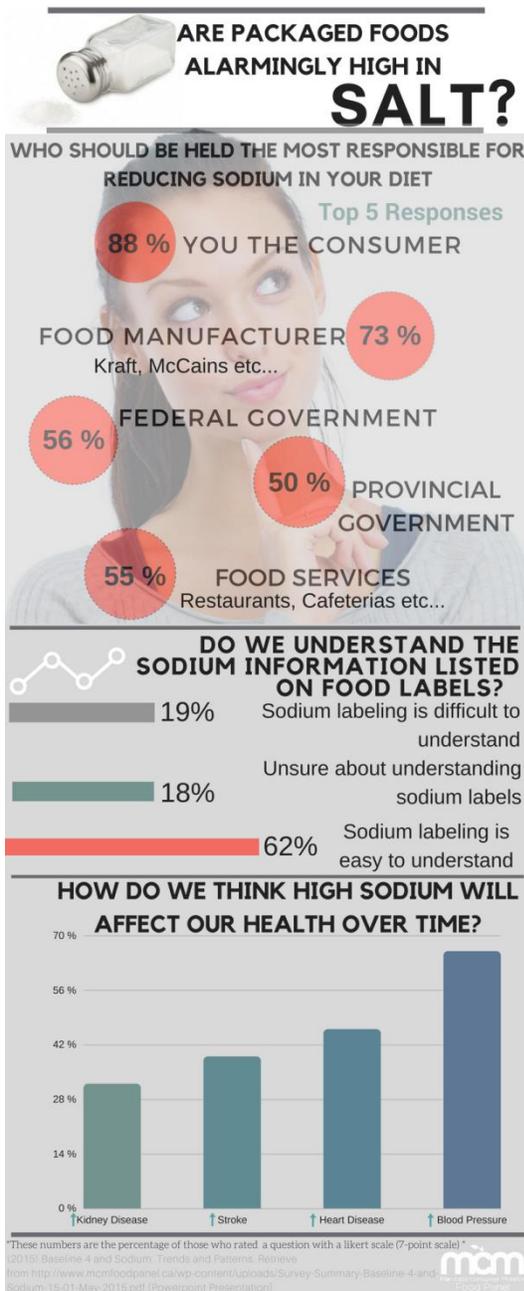


Figure 2

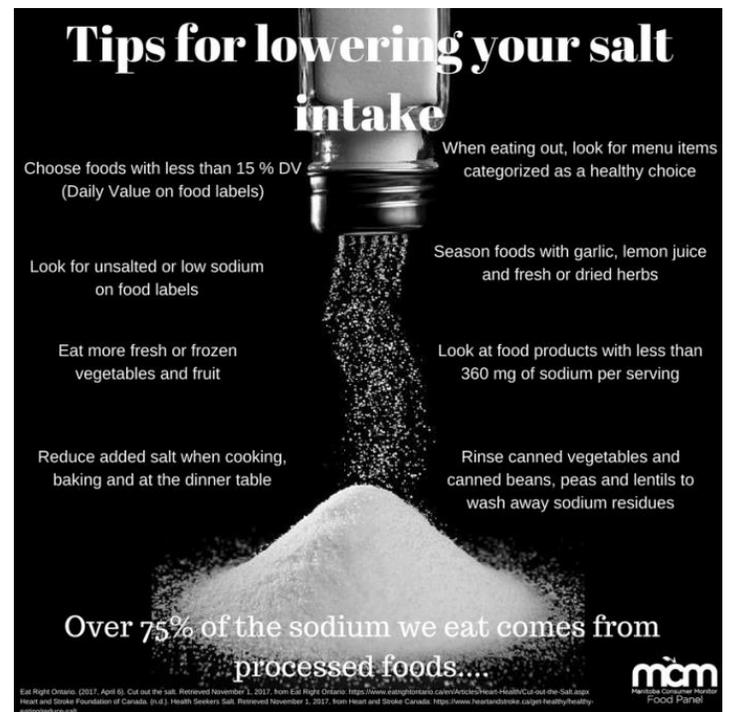


Figure 1

**Works Cited**

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