

Healthy Living in McLennan County

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

April—June
2022

May is National High Blood Pressure Education

Reducing the Salt in your diet can help to lower Blood Pressure



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Measurement

Conversions:

3 tsp = 1 Tbs

2 Tbs = 1/8 cup

4 Tbs = 1/4 Cup

5 Tbs + 1 tsp =
1/3 cup

1 Tbs = 1/2 oz

4 Tbs = 2 oz =
1/4 cup

1 oz = 28 grams

1/4 cup = 56
grams

**1 cup = 128
grams = 4.5 oz**

If you want to cut a recipe into halve or less you can use the conversions above to convert to units that are more manageable.

The recommended amount of sodium is 2300mg per day, that is about a teaspoon! The average American adult consumes about 3400mg, that is almost 30% above the recommended limit. For individuals with hypertension or high blood pressure the recommended intake is 1500mg or less than half of the average adult intake. There are some simple ways to cut down our sodium intake without having to give up the foods we enjoy, we can make some small adjustments in how we prepare and shop for our

foods. Many of our highest sodium foods are those that are centered around breads, simply because we eat so much of them. If you think about a sandwich for instance, the deli meats and cheeses are very high in sodium and then we add condiments that are again very high in sodium. If we choose healthier options like veggies such as tomato, avocado, and lettuce. Skip the cheese and add hummus, or try peanut butter with sliced apple or banana. We can still get our

quick and packable sandwich but we are cutting down significantly on the sodium we are consuming. Another lunch time favorite, soups, are very high in sodium. A can of soup has almost half of our daily recommended intake of sodium, look for lower sodium varieties or make your own, adding only enough salt to taste. Pizza, burritos and tacos are all very high in sodium, an 8-inch flour tortilla can have about 400mg of sodium and then we add

5 Foods to Improve Your Digestion

Digestive problems, such as gas, constipation and diarrhea, affect millions of people, with 15 percent of people in Western countries experiencing a severe form of gut sensitivity called irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

Here are five foods that promote healthier digestion and help you avoid common gastrointestinal symptoms.

1. Whole Grains

Doctors say that if you want your gut to work better, choose whole grains, since optimal colon function re-

quires at least 25 grams of fiber daily.

Compared to refined carbohydrates, like white bread and pasta, whole grains provide lots of fiber, as well as added nutrients, such as omega-3 fatty acids. When gut bacteria ferment fiber, they produce short-chain fatty acids. These molecules encourage proper function in the cells lining the colon, where 70 percent of our immune cells live.

Despite the popularity of low-carb diets for weight

loss, avoiding grains altogether may not be so great for the good gut bacteria that thrive on fiber.

2. Leafy Greens

Spinach or kale, are excellent sources of fiber, as well as nutrients like folate, vitamin C, vitamin K and vitamin A. Research shows that leafy greens also contain a specific type of sugar that helps fuel growth of healthy gut bacteria.

Eating a lot of fiber and leafy greens allows you to develop an ideal gut micro-

Reduce the Salt *(Continued)*



Remember to add citric acid or lemon juice to your home canned tomatoes

Increase health and decrease weight by adding more vegetables to your diet

cheese, beans and seasoned meat to make it even higher in sodium. Rotisserie or fried chicken from a grocery store or restaurant contains up to four times the sodium of plain chicken prepared at home. An egg contains only 62mg of sodium, most fast-food egg breakfast sandwiches are made with cheese and ham on an English muffin, and omelets are also often full of cheese, bacon, and ham, an average of over 800mg of sodium.

Being a smart shopper can also help reduce daily sodium intake; buying fresh or frozen vegetables instead of canned, or buy the No Salt Added variety. If you buy prepared meals check the labels and choose meals with 600mg or less of sodium per serving. When possible, purchase fresh poul-

try, fish, pork, and lean meat, rather than cured, salted, smoked, and other processed meats. For fresh items, check to see whether saline or salt solution has been added—if so, choose another brand. Be an avid label reader and compare different brands by checking the sodium levels on the label, and make sure you are checking the serving sizes. When cooking at home, use alternative seasonings to replace or reduce the amount of salt you use, such as garlic, citrus juice, salt-free seasonings, or spices. When dining out, ask to see the nutritional information for the foods served. Always ask to have dressings and sauces on the side so you can limit the amount that you use. For overall good habits, try

and eat more fresh fruit and vegetables, keep the salt shaker off of the table and limit the use of prepared seasoning mixes and flavorings, try making your own blends. Learning to use your own spices and cooking at home are very effective ways to cut the sodium without cutting the flavor of the foods you enjoy.

The health benefits of a lower sodium diet can be very significant in lowering blood pressure for those with or without a hypertension diagnosis. Following a heart-healthy diet such as the DASH Diet or the Mediterranean Diet also add the benefits of using heart-healthy fats, fewer processed foods and more fruits and vegetables.

Healthy Digestion *(Continued)*



remember that fresh fruits and vegetables aren't required to carry the label — so some of your healthiest food choices remain label-free and nutrition rich.

biome — those trillions of organisms that live in the colon.

3. Lean Proteins

People with IBS or bowel sensitivity should stick with lean proteins and avoid foods that are rich in fat, including fried foods.

High-fat foods can trigger contractions of the colon, and the high fat content of red meat is just one reason to choose healthier options. Experts say that red meat also promotes colon bacteria that produce chemicals associated with an increased risk of clogged arteries.

4. Less Fructose

If you're somebody who's prone to gas and bloating, you may want to try reducing your consumption of fructose, or fruit sugar. Some fruits such as apples, pears and mango are all high in fructose.

On the other hand, berries and citrus fruits, such as oranges and grapefruit, contain less fructose, making them easier to tolerate and less likely to cause gas. Bananas are another low-fructose fruit that are fiber-rich and contain inulin, a substance that stimulates the

growth of good bacteria in the gut.

5. Avocado

Avocado is a superfood packed with fiber and essential nutrients, such as potassium, which helps promote healthy digestive function. It's also a low-fructose food, so it's less likely to cause gas. Be wary of portion sizes when it comes to foods like nuts and avocados. Although they are rich in nutrients, they are also high in fat, so be sure to eat them in moderation.

From: Hopkins.medicine.org



Air Fryer Crispy (Un) Fried Chicken

Want the taste of fried chicken without the extra saturated fat and calories? Try our super-easy, super-scrumptious unfried version — tender and juicy on the inside and crispy on the outside. It's a classic American favorite from the South.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 Tbs minced fresh parsley
- 2 tsp dried parsley, crumbled
- 1/2 tsp ground oregano

- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 1/4 tsp cayenne
- 1/4 tsp crushed pepper flakes (optional)
- 1/2—1 cup low fat buttermilk
- 1/2 Tbs red hot-pepper sauce (optional)
- 1/3 cup finely crushed whole grain crispbread or whole-grain crackers or whole wheat panko
- 1/3 cup parmesan cheese
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 4 oz each) flattened to 1/4 inch thickness and dried with a paper towel

Directions

Preheat air fryer to 390 degrees

In a shallow dish or pie pan, whisk together the flour, parsley, oregano, pepper and cayenne

In a separate shallow dish or pie pan, whisk together the buttermilk, and hot sauce. In a third shallow dish or pie pan stir together the crispbread crumbs and parmesan. Set the dishes and a large plate in a row, assembly line fashion. Dip the chicken in the flour mixture, then the buttermilk and then the crumb mixture, turning to coat at each step and gently shaking off any excess. Using your fingers gently press the

crumb mixture so it adheres to the chicken. Place the chicken on the plate. Cover and refrigerate 30 minutes to 4 hours.

Lightly spray the chicken with cooking spray. Arrange the chicken in a single layer in the air fryer basket. (don't overcrowd, work in batches if necessary) Cook for 10 to 15 minutes, or until chicken is no longer pink in the center and the top coating is golden brown, turning once and lightly spraying the other side with the cooking spray

Tip: No buttermilk on hand? No worries. Whisk together 1 cup fat-free or low-fat milk with 1 tablespoon lemon juice or white vinegar. Let stand for 5 minutes.

From: American Heart Association Heart Healthy Recipes

<https://recipes.heart.org/en/>

219 Calories, 29 grams protein



Teriyaki Salmon with Cauliflower Rice

Easy enough to pull off for a weeknight meal, the salmon layered onto the cauliflower rice is also impressive enough in looks and taste to serve for company. Better yet, the salmon is heart-healthy and the fluffy cauliflower soaks up the soy sauce.

Ingredients:

- 2 Tbs low sodium soy sauce

- 1 Tbs water
- 1 Tbs dry sherry or balsamic vinegar
- 1 Tbs sesame oil
- 1 tsp white vinegar
- 1/2 tsp no-calorie sweetener
- 1 tsp fresh minced garlic
- 1 tsp fresh minced ginger
- 4 (6 ounce) salmon fillets, skin removed
- 1 head cauliflower
- 1/2 white onion, peeled and roughly chopped
- 1 tsp canola oil
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 1 cup chopped fresh cilantro leaves
- 1 tsp sesame seeds
- 2 scallions finely chopped

Directions

In a 8X8 inch baking pan, add marinade ingredients : soy sauce, water, sherry, sesame oil, white vinegar, sweetener, garlic and ginger. Add salmon fillets on their side and marinade for at least 1 hour up to 24 hours.

When ready to cook the salmon, remove the

fish from the refrigerator and preheat oven to 450 degrees.

Meanwhile, trim and discard leaves of cauliflower. Roughly chop the cauliflower florets and the onion, put into the bowl of a food processor and pulse to the consistency of couscous, transfer to a medium bowl until all the cauliflower rice has been made.

Place the baking dish with the salmon in the preheated oven and bake until salmon is almost fully cooked, turn the heat to broil and broil another 2-4 minutes to brown, fish is done when easily flaked with a fork.

Heat canola oil in a pan over medium heat and cook cauliflower mixture in salt until tender, 5-6 minutes top with cilantro place on plates and add salmon on top of the rice and garnish with the scallions.

311 Calories, 38 grams protein

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION



The **mission** of the **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service** is to provide quality, relevant outreach and continuing educational programs and services to the people of **Texas**. ... The agency improves the lives of Texans through an educational process that uses research-based knowledge focused on issues and needs.

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Upcoming Programs

April

4 & 11 Food Protection Managers Course.
Please call (254) 757-5180 for more information

7 Instant Pot Cooking

Hands on workshop to master your electric pressure cooker. call (254) 299-8888 or register online at: www.MCCandYOU.com

14, 21 & 28 Coping to Control

3 week diabetes management to help manage the stress of living with Diabetes. Please call (254) 757-5180 for more information

May

10, 17, 24, 31 & June 7th Do Well Be Well with Diabetes

Diabetes management education. Please call (254) 757-5180 for more information

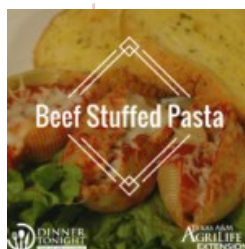
June

6 & 13 Food Protection Managers Course.
Please call (254) 757-5180 for more information

9 Cooking with Cultures the flavors of India
call (254) 299-8888 or register online at: www.MCCandYOU.com

8, 15 & 22 Lunch and Learn Cooking for Brain Health call (254) 299-8888 or register online at: www.MCCandYOU.com

Recipe links for Dinner Tonight Kid Friendly Recipes



Beef Stuffed Pasta

Change up the classic pasta dinner to this Beef Stuffed Pasta recipe! It's filling and serves 8.

<https://dinnertonight.tamu.edu/recipe/beef-stuffed-pasta/>



Pretzel Crusted Chicken

This tasty recipe is easy to prepare and sure to impress. We'll show you how to bring it all together smoothly, so you can enjoy the dinner as much as your family.

<https://dinnertonight.tamu.edu/recipe/pretzel-crusted-chicken/>



Zucchini Chips and Ranch Dip

In many parts of Texas, zucchini is a flourishing crop for gardeners this year. These Zucchini Chips and Dip are a great and delicious way to utilize this produce item.

<https://dinnertonight.tamu.edu/recipe/zucchini-chips-and-ranch-dip/>