

Salty Situations –Moving Beyond the Salt Shaker!

Do you ever find yourself asking whether you should focus on reducing sodium or salt? We hear many different messages about reducing the amount of sodium, salt, and sodium containing ingredients in the foods we eat. Surprisingly, sodium is found more often in processed foods, such as casseroles, pizza, and cold cuts, than the salt shaker. One message is clear, Americans tend to consume more sodium than what is recommended and should limit the amount of sodium eaten daily.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans (2010) recommends limiting daily sodium intake to less than 2,300 milligrams. Eating too much sodium may lead to high blood pressure, which may increase the risk for a heart attack and stroke. Reducing sodium, which includes salt or other sodium containing ingredients, is beneficial in reducing risks for these health related conditions. Follow these tips to reduce daily sodium intake.

Read the nutrition label. The nutrition facts label is one way to identify foods low or high in sodium. The percent daily value listed on the nutrition facts label can help you quickly determine if a food is low or high in sodium. Remember this rule for sodium, if the percent daily value is five or less this is a good bet! If the percent daily value is twenty percent or more leave it at the store! Be sure to choose foods with five percent sodium more often.

Know foods with sodium. Knowing common foods high in sodium can help to make choosing lower sodium options easier. Major sources of sodium include processed foods like canned products, breads, deli meats, snack foods, and mixed dishes. Look for foods labeled as “low sodium” or “reduced sodium” and choose these foods.

Choose lower sodium foods at the store. Choosing foods lower in sodium can help reduce your daily sodium intake. When you are at the store, compare different brands for condiments, canned foods, breads, and other sodium containing foods. Different brands of foods can have different sodium levels. Choose the lowest sodium between the foods you compare.

Reducing sodium in the foods we eat can take a little practice. The tips listed are just a few of the many ways to begin reducing sodium. If you would like to know more about sodium and health, tips on reducing sodium, or how to identify sodium in foods contact the AgriLife Extension Office at 903-473-4580 or visit us at rains.agrilife.org. We are also on Facebook at [Facebook.com/pages/Rains-County-Family-Consumer-Sciences](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Rains-County-Family-Consumer-Sciences). Go and “Like” our page to keep up with the latest news, events, and programs offered by Family & Consumer Sciences in Rains County.

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Acorn Squash with Apples

Ingredients

1. 1 Granny Smith apple, peeled, cored and sliced
2. 2 tablespoons brown sugar
3. 1 small acorn squash, about 6 inches in diameter
4. 2 teaspoons trans fat-free margarine

Directions

In a small bowl, mix together the apple and brown sugar. Set aside.

Pierce the squash several times with a sharp knife to let the steam escape during cooking. Microwave on high until tender, about 5 minutes. Turn the squash after 3 minutes to ensure even cooking.

Place the squash on a cutting board and cut in half. Scrape the seeds out of the center of each half and discard the seeds. Fill the hollowed squash with the apple mixture.

Return the squash to the microwave and cook until the apples are softened, about 2 minutes.

Transfer the squash to a serving dish. Top each half with 1 teaspoon margarine and serve immediately.

Nutritional analysis per serving

Serving size: 1/2 squash and 1/2 apple

- Calories 204
- Total fat 4 g
- Monounsaturated fat 2 g
- Cholesterol 0 mg
- Sodium 46 mg
- Total carbohydrate 40 g

Serves 12

Pumpkin Cream Cheese Dip

Ingredients

Spread:

8 ounces low-fat cream cheese (room temperature)
3/4 cup of canned pumpkin (unsweetened, unsalted)
3 tablespoons sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Serve with:

6 apples sliced

Directions

Mix all ingredients for the spread together in a mixing bowl by hand or with an electric mixer (medium speed). Serve with apple slices for dipping.

Nutritional analysis per serving

Serving size: About 3 tablespoons

- Total carbohydrate 18 g
- Dietary fiber 3 g
- Sodium 91 mg
- Total fat 3 g
- Cholesterol 10 mg
- Calories 107

<http://www.mayoclinic.org>