
Wise Notes for Consumers

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Sodium

To keep the body running normally, you need sodium. Some of the most basic work your body does depends on sodium. Sodium is needed to: maintain proper fluid balance; regulate your blood pressure; transmit nerve impulses; and help muscles relax, including your heart muscle. However, few Americans need to be concerned about getting enough. The National Institutes of Health and the American Heart Association recommend that we consume less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium each day. That's about the amount in 1 teaspoon of salt. Some people such as African Americans, individuals with hypertension, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease and individuals ages 51 and older should reduce their sodium intake even further to 1,500 mg per day.

On average, most adults consume 4,000 to 6,000 milligrams of sodium daily. That's significantly more than we actually need and may lead to hypertension (high blood pressure). Why do many Americans consume so much salt each day? Small amounts of sodium naturally occur in many foods. However the biggest source of sodium is salt added to food during: food processing, cooking; and at the table. Following are a few ideas to decrease your salt intake.

Savory flavors and flavors with "bite," are the most effective in replacing the taste of salt. Examples of spices with a "bite" are black pepper, garlic powder, curry powder, cumin, dill seeds, basil, ginger, coriander and onion. Try some of these spices in place of salt in recipes you prepare.

Store-bought taco seasoning and fajita mixes can be high in sodium. Reduce your sodium intake by making your own spice mixes. See recipe below

Chili and Spice Seasoning

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national orientation. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

Makes: 7 servings

A combination of zesty herbs and spices add flavor without adding salt. Make this seasoning mix ahead of time and keep it in your pantry to use in soups, stews, sauces, casseroles, and more!

Ingredients

4 tablespoons paprika
2 tablespoons oregano (dried, crushed)
2 teaspoons chili powder
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon pepper (black)
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/2 teaspoon dry mustard

Directions

1. Mix together all ingredients. Store in airtight container.

Nutrition Information

Calories- 16; Total Fat1 g; Saturated Fat0 g; Cholesterol 0; Sodium 30 mg;
Total Carbohydrate 3g; Dietary Fiber 2g; Total Sugars 0

Source: US Department of Health and Human Services, A Healthier You.

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