



5 Clean Eating Tips for Reducing Sodium Intake

I have a confession. I am mildly addicted to popcorn, and could easily consume a huge bag of it. We're talking a warehouse club sized bag gone in one or two sittings. Though certainly there are worse habits, this one is none too pretty the next day when I am retaining all that sodium. The solution has been to only keep small portion-sized bags of popcorn in the house, and it seems to be doing the trick.

Though I'm all for [Himalayan salt lamps](#), as a nation we *consume* way too much sodium from table salt. Our bodies do require *some* salt for survival, but a jumbo movie theatre popcorn was not exactly what nature intended. Table salt provides sodium and chloride. Our bodies cannot produce these vital elements on their own, so we must get them from our diets. Reducing sodium intake means making smarter choices (even if that movie theatre popcorn is pretty darn tasty).

In 2015, the World Health Organization confirmed that in general we eat way too much sodium from table salt and not enough potassium to maintain heart health and reduce our chances of heart disease and stroke. Potassium helps offset the hypertensive effects of sodium, and the imbalance may be what ultimately leads to hypertension and high blood pressure. So we need to work on reducing sodium intake and increasing potassium consumption.

Potassium Benefits

As a crucial electrolyte for proper bodily function, some of potassium's primary benefits include regulating fluid balance and controlling the electrical activity of the heart and other muscles, promoting good cardiovascular health and lowering blood pressure. Additionally, foods that are rich in potassium help prevent muscle cramps, mitigate loss of bone mineral density, and slow down the natural muscle wasting that comes with age. Potassium does so by promoting an alkaline environment in the body, which offsets the damaging metabolic acidosis caused by a variety of other common foods. Therefore, potassium is a key nutrient for staying fit and active throughout one's life.

According to *Medical News Daily*, people that take in more than 5,200 milligrams (recommended daily intake is 4,500 mg) of potassium per day maintained an average of 3.6 more pounds of lean tissue mass than those with a potassium intake 50% lower. Other studies also show an increase in bone density with high potassium intake.

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Don't remove, replace!

Whether you are cooking for just yourself or a group of 10, your food needs to taste good, which is why we don't want to remove sodium completely but instead replace it with a healthy and flavorful alternative. And cooking at home is not only sodium-friendly, but it is also wallet and waistline friendly too!

Switch your starch.

Baked goods tend to have high amounts of sodium due to their processing method (this includes refined carbohydrates like white bread, white bread products and white rice). Instead choose starches like whole grain bread and quinoa. The lower amount of salt and higher amount of fiber that these guys have will help keep those belly's flat all bathing suit-season long! And when it comes to that sweet tooth, skip the sweet starch like cookies, cakes, etc. for a piece of dark chocolate.

Snack wisely.

Ditch those salty packaged snacks like chips, pretzels, salted/roasted nuts, and anything you'd find in a vending machine for snacks that will hit that salty craving but with less salt and a lot more nutrition! Try sunflower seeds, pistachio nuts, olives, or go homemade with your own baked kale chips, roasted chickpeas, or air-popped popcorn, and work in some more fresh fruit and veggies to your snacking overall.

Ditch the deli meats.

Whether they are the topping to your salad or the leading role in your sandwich, cold cuts are notoriously high in sodium. Leave them at the counter and go for fresh roasted turkey, grilled chicken or fish, mayo-free tuna salad, or hardboiled eggs instead. These options will add in the right amount of protein without the added salt. For the perfect summer sandwich add in some fresh lettuce and tomato or grilled veggies on whole grain bread.

Can the canned fruits and vegetables.

With these warmer months fresh fruits and vegetables are all around, so take advantage! But when it comes to frozen or canned, always, always choose frozen. Frozen options retain exactly the same nutrients, vitamins, minerals and ripeness as their fresh-counterparts, while the canning process adds in tremendous sodium and does not retain the nutrients the same way.

Processed foods are infamously high in sodium and low in potassium. One way of reducing sodium intake is to cut out all the process foods. Another way is to substitute table salt with products such as [Salt for Life®](#). Recently I learned that through a proprietary blend of potassium salt from Canada and sea salt from Brazil, [Salt for Life®](#) delivers that salty taste we're looking for, but with a 75% reduction in sodium. The sodium is replaced with (you guessed) it potassium.