



# PARENTS: TOO MUCH SALT ISN'T GOOD FOR YOU—OR YOUR KIDS!

## Support and Promote the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*

Many children and adults enjoy and are used to the taste of salt. Most processed foods, such as pretzels, crackers, chips, canned soup, boxed noodles, even cookies and other sweets contain salt.

In general, both children and adults are eating too much salt. Eating too much salt, or too many foods that contain a lot of salt can lead to high blood pressure and heart disease—even in kids!

Many schools are now making an effort to decrease the amount of salt in the foods they serve and offer to students at school and at school-related functions.

The *Michigan Nutrition Standards* recommend that schools reduce the salt (sodium) in school meals and snacks offered and served at school, and in foods offered or sold in school stores and at school-related functions.

At home, parents can also make changes to reduce the amount of salt in their kids'—and their own—diets too. Read on for more information.

## HOW MUCH SALT DO WE NEED?

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines recommend:

### No more than 1500 mg per day for:

- people who are over 51 years old;
- African American adults and children of any age;
- People of any age who have high blood pressure, diabetes, or kidney disease

### No more than 2300 mg per day for:

- Everyone else who is not in one of the above categories

There is about 2300 mg of sodium in one teaspoon of table salt. **Just a pinch here and there matters.** The amount of salt we need to stay healthy is very small. Adults and kids can get all the salt they need without ever eating foods that have added salt or using salt from a salt shaker.



## WHERE'S THE SALT?

Some foods naturally contain sodium but most of the salt we eat comes in packages. Fresh or unprocessed foods like fruits, vegetables, meat, and milk aren't high in sodium.

Processed foods that are usually high in sodium (salt) are:

- Chips and crackers
- Pickles
- Pretzels
- Canned vegetables
- Bacon
- Cold cuts/deli meats
- Canned soups and packaged soup
- Condiments such as ketchup, mustard, soy sauce, and salad dressing
- Boxed noodles, rice, or pasta mixes
- Frozen dinners, snacks, and breakfast foods
- Breads, bagels and other baked good
- Food additives that contain sodium

Parents can help their children learn to choose and eat lower-sodium foods by offering them at home. Keep offering healthy, less-processed, low- or no-salt foods to your kids so they will learn to eat and enjoy them.

Provide healthy after-school snacks and foods for classroom parties or celebrations that are low-sodium.

## TO REDUCE SODIUM (SALT) IN YOUR FAMILY'S DIET

- Eat more fresh foods.
- Buy plain whole grain rice and pasta instead of ones that have added seasonings. Or, if you buy packaged noodle or rice mixes, use only half of the flavor packet.
- Make your own soups from scratch.
- Use herbs, spices, and salt-free seasoning blends to flavor your food.
- Rinse canned foods that contain added salt, such as veggies and beans. When available, buy low- or reduced-sodium, or no-salt-added versions of these foods.
- Remove the salt shaker from the table.
- Use fresh poultry, fish, and lean meat, instead of high-salt canned or processed meats such as hot dogs or bologna. Buy fresh and frozen poultry or meat that hasn't been injected with a sodium-containing solution.
- Choose ready-to-eat breakfast cereals, breads and baked goods that are lower in sodium.

