



Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

REDUCING SALT INTAKE

**Information for
renal patients**



Oxford Kidney Unit

If you would like advice about reducing your salt intake, then this is the leaflet for you.

WHAT IS SALT?

Salt is the name commonly used for the compound sodium chloride. It is the sodium part of salt that needs to be limited. Rock salt, sea salt, Himalayan salt, garlic salt and celery salt all have the same sodium content as common table salt.

HOW MUCH SALT SHOULD I HAVE?

The recommendation for the general population is to have no more than 6g of salt a day (approximately a teaspoon). People with kidney disease should have less than this.

WHY SHOULD I REDUCE MY SALT INTAKE?

Reducing your salt intake can:

- help reduce blood pressure
- help prevent carrying extra fluid (oedema)
- help reduce feelings of thirst (useful if you are on a fluid restriction).

HOW DO I REDUCE MY SALT INTAKE?

Some simple ways of reducing your salt intake may include:

- avoiding adding any salt at the table
- avoiding using salt when cooking
- reducing your intake of foods which are high in salt and switching to lower-salt alternatives.

(See table on the next page)

	High in salt:	Lower-salt alternative:
Meat	Processed meats, such as bacon, ham, gammon, sausages, pork pies, beef burgers, salami, corned beef, pâté, sausage rolls, meat pies	Plain, fresh meat, such as chicken, turkey, lamb, beef, pork
Fish	Fish tinned in brine, smoked fish, fish pâté, shellfish, processed fish (such as scampi and seafood sticks)	Fresh or frozen unsalted fish, fish tinned in spring water or oil (check the food label)
Vegetables	Tinned vegetables, baked beans	Fresh or frozen vegetables, reduced salt baked beans, tinned vegetables/pulses labelled as salt-free
Dairy	Cheese spread (e.g. Dairylea and Primula) Hard cheeses (e.g. cheddar, edam, feta, gouda and stilton) Soft cheeses (e.g. brie and camembert)	Lower-salt cheeses, such as cottage cheese and cream cheese (e.g. Philadelphia) and mozzarella
Savoury snacks	Crisps, salted nuts, dry roasted nuts, salted snacks (such as Twiglets or pretzels), tortilla chips, Mini Cheddars, Ritz biscuits, Tuc biscuits	Plain unsalted crisps, such as Salt 'n' Shake without adding the salt sachet, unsalted nuts, unsalted popcorn, plain breadsticks, cream crackers, Ryvita, cereal bars
Miscellaneous	Marmite, Bovril, OXO and Bisto products, stock cubes, gravy granules, tinned or packet soups, tinned spaghetti, Pot Noodles, bottled sauces (such as soy sauce and tomato ketchup), chutney, peanut butter	Natex savoury spread, Kallo very low-salt or baby stock cubes, reduced salt gravy granules, gravy browning, homemade soup without added salt, fresh or dried pasta and noodles, reduced salt sauces, vinegar, whole nut peanut butter (100% peanuts)

UNDERSTANDING FOOD LABELLING

Approximately 75% of our salt intake comes from ready-made foods. It is important to look at food labels when making decisions about which foods to buy. Remember, food labels may show the salt content per 100g and not always the salt content of the entire portion.

This is high	This is moderate	This is low
Over 1.5g per 100g or over 1.8g per portion	0.3-1.5g per 100g	Under 0.3g per 100g

Choose foods with more green coding and fewer with amber coding. Avoid foods with red coding.

Many products offer low-salt alternatives, such as soy sauce, tomato ketchup and baked beans. Check the food labels and compare brands.

If you have been told to follow a low-potassium diet you should avoid all salt substitutes, such as LoSalt and So-Low, as these contain potassium chloride. Also be aware of potassium chloride on food labels, which is often used instead of salt in packaged products.

HOW TO MAKE LOWER-SALT CHOICES BY LOOKING AT FOOD LABELS

Higher-salt option	Lower-salt option
One small tin of baked beans = 1.33g of salt	One small tin of reduced-salt baked beans = 0.97g of salt
An average serving (30g) of cornflakes = 0.34g of salt	Two shredded wheat = trace amount of salt
An average portion (30g) of cheddar cheese = 0.22g of salt	An average portion (30g) of cream cheese = 0.08g of salt
An average slice of ham (23g) = 1.84g of salt	An average slice of chicken (23g) = 1.33g of salt

These are examples of foods where salt content can vary. Check the salt label on the following foods:

- quiche and pastry-based foods
- breakfast cereals
- pre-prepared sandwiches
- breaded or battered meat or fish
- processed potatoes, such as wedges and waffles
- vegetable or pulse-based dips, such as guacamole and hummus.

PRACTICAL TIPS

Your taste buds should adjust to a lower-salt intake over time.

The following are suggestions to help you reduce the salt in your diet:

- Try using herbs and spices to flavour foods, instead of using salt.
- Try making gravy the traditional way with gravy browning, reduced-salt stock and meat juices and not adding salt.
- Try and prepare your own food from fresh if possible and plan meals in advance. You can cook meals in batches and freeze extra portions to save time when you need a quick meal.
- When eating out or having a takeaway, ask the chef or person taking your order for no salt or monosodium glutamate (MSG) to

be added to your meal. You can refer to our eating out diet sheet for more information.

- You can check how much salt is in your food using smartphone apps. Many apps are available to download for free from iTunes and Google Play, such as FoodSwitch and My Fitness Pal.

USING ALTERNATIVE FLAVOURINGS

Below are a few examples of herbs, spices and flavourings which you can experiment with to add flavour to your meals without adding salt

Basil	Soups, salads, stews, lamb chops, roast beef, vegetable dishes, pasta dishes, tomatoes
Bay leaf	Stews, potatoes, pasta sauces
Black pepper	Useful all-round flavouring
Chives	Potato salad, chicken, fish, omelettes
Cumin	Curry, rice
Dill	Fish, chicken, vegetables, potatoes, salad, pasta
Garlic	Lean meats, pasta dishes, stir fries
Ginger	Cod, haddock, lamb, pork, before grilling or roasting
Lemon/Lime	Fish, chicken, salad, stir fries
Mint	Lamb, pasta, rice, potatoes
Nutmeg	Potatoes, chicken, fish, white sauce, vegetable dishes
Paprika	Chicken, white fish, rice, eggs
Parsley	Fish, chicken, eggs, vegetables
Rosemary	Beef, lamb, chicken, potatoes, beans
Sage	Homemade stuffing for pork, chicken or turkey
Tarragon	Chicken, fish, salads, sauces
Thyme	Stew, scrambled eggs, stuffing, omelettes
Turmeric	Curry

EXAMPLE MEAL PLAN FOR REDUCING YOUR SALT INTAKE

High-salt meal plan		Salt (g)
Breakfast:	2 rashers of bacon on 2 slices of toast	2.5
Lunch:	Corned beef sandwich (2 slices of bread) and a pork pie	3.5
Mid-afternoon:	Ritz crackers with cheese slices	0.7
Evening meal:	2 sausages with instant mash and baked beans	2.2
Pudding:	Apple pie with custard	1.5
Total		10.4

Reduced-salt meal plan		Salt (g)
Breakfast:	Marmalade on 2 slices of toast	0.4
Lunch:	Egg sandwich (2 slices of bread) and fresh fruit	0.9
Mid-afternoon:	Plain rice cake and cream cheese	0.3
Evening meal:	Roast chicken with frozen vegetables and boiled/mashed potato	0.2
Pudding:	Apple pie (lower-salt option) with custard. Check the food label.	0.2
Total		2.0

USEFUL INFORMATION

Oxford Kidney Unit

The website has lots of information about the Oxford Kidney Unit for patients and carers. There is a specific section about dietetics.

Website: www.ouh.nhs.uk/oku

NHS Website

Website: www.nhs.uk

PatientView

This shows your latest blood results.

Website: www.patientview.org

HOW TO CONTACT US

If you would like further information about anything in this leaflet, please ask to speak with one of the dietitians.

Oxford Renal Dietitians

Tel: **01865 225 061**

(8.00am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday)

Please leave a message on the answerphone and a dietitian will call you back the next working day.

Oxford Renal Clinics

If you are seeing a kidney doctor, the dietitians are available in the Renal Outpatient clinic at the Churchill Hospital each morning. Please speak to the receptionist if you would like to be seen.

Renal Network Clinics

Some of these clinics are covered by a dietitian. Please ask the receptionist if you would like to be seen.

If you need an interpreter or would like this information leaflet in another format, such as Easy Read, large print, Braille, audio, electronically or another language, please speak to the department where you are being seen. You will find their contact details on your appointment letter.



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Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
www.ouh.nhs.uk/information

Making a difference across our hospitals

charity@ouh.nhs.uk | 01865 743 444 | hospitalcharity.co.uk

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