

10 SURPRISING HIGH SODIUM FOODS BY DR. LOUIS IGNARRO 2014

Over 90 percent of people age 2 and older eat too much sodium, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).



That's nine out of 10 Americans! Those numbers hold true in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, mostly due to the prevalence of processed foods, and in certain Asian countries that include high amounts of sodium in sauces and cooking.

Sodium impacts blood pressure levels, which affects heart health. While you do need some sodium in your diet, it's best to keep your intake within the recommended 2,300 milligrams (mg) or less daily; if you're over 51, which number drops to less than 1,500 mg per day.

You might think that if you forgo the salt shaker while making meals, that's enough. But most of the sodium you eat comes from processed or restaurant foods. According to the CDC, 44 percent of the sodium a person eats comes from 10 surprising sources:

Breads and rolls: A single slice of white bread contains 80 to 120 mg of sodium, and that number obviously doubles if you're eating a sandwich made with two slices of bread.

Cold cuts and cured meats: Most people think of deli meats as healthy, but 3 ounces of deli or pre-packaged luncheon meat, such as ham or turkey, can contain 450 to 1,050 mg of sodium.

Pizza: While you probably don't think of pizza as a health food, you might be surprised to learn that just one slice of regular crust cheese pizza from a restaurant can contain 510 to 760 mg of sodium.

Poultry: Much of raw poultry (fresh and processed) has been injected with a sodium solution. One fresh chicken breast can contain up to 330 mg of sodium. (The same goes for pork.)

Soups: Not all soups are high in sodium, but many are—especially canned or pre-packaged, so be sure to read the label. Sodium content in chicken noodle soup, for example, can vary by up to 840 mg per serving.

Sandwiches: A sandwich made with white bread and turkey deli meat can contain as much as 1,290 mg of sodium. A cheeseburger from a fast food restaurant can contain a staggering 710 to 1,690 mg.

Cheese: Most cheese contains high amounts of saturated fat and sodium. A 1-ounce slice of processed American cheese contains up to 460 mg of sodium.

Pasta dishes: Just one cup of canned pasta with meat sauce contains anywhere from 600 to 1,120 mg of sodium. Since I have Italian roots, I love pasta—but I know to limit my intake and opt for a low-sodium meatless sauce with lots of veggies over whole wheat pasta.

Meat dishes: Meat-mixed entrees, such as meat loaf with tomato sauce, can pack high amounts of sodium. One frozen meat loaf dinner, for example, can have as much as 1,400 mg of sodium.

Snacks: Chips, pretzels and popcorn can also be loaded with sodium. Just 1 ounce of plain potato chips can contain 50 to 200 mg. Most people don't stop at 1 ounce, either, which means they're likely eating much higher amounts of sodium.

How can you reduce your intake? Here are a few simple strategies:

- **Opt for low-sodium foods.** Fresh options like fruits and vegetables are a great part of any diet, and they're especially beneficial if you're looking to reduce sodium intake. Potatoes, beans, bananas and yogurt are also good options to support healthy blood pressure levels.
- **Buy carefully.** Check the labels of the premade foods you buy. Along with reviewing other nutrition content, verify that the sodium amount per serving is low.

- **Ask questions.** Opt for fresh meat over packaged options, and don't be afraid to ask the person at the deli counter if the meat you're considering purchasing is injected with sodium.
 - **Exercise more.** Sweating is one way the body excretes sodium; that's why endurance athletes usually have higher sodium needs. Go for a run, bike, hike, walk, swim—whatever gets you sweating.
 - **Eat out smart.** Americans dine at restaurants an average of five times per week. When you order food, ask if restaurants have low-sodium options or if they can make certain dishes with less sodium. For example, if a dish comes with a side of vegetables, ask for them steamed instead of sautéed in butter and salt.
- Lower sodium is part of a heart-healthy diet, and reducing sodium intake is something I focus on in my own diet.

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