



# EATING 101

## RU DINING HEALTHY?

A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE RU HEALTHY DINING TEAM  
A Joint Program Between Rutgers Dining Services and The New Jersey Institute for Food, Nutrition, and Health

### Slash Your Sodium

Feeling salty about your sodium intake? You are not alone; on average Americans consume 50% more than the recommended level of sodium. Recently, the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) encouraged food manufacturers and chain restaurants to cut sodium content in processed, packaged, and prepared foods in an attempt to reduce Americans' sodium intake. Although sodium is an essential nutrient, consuming a high sodium (and low potassium) diet has been linked to an increased risk of hypertension (high blood pressure) which in turn increases risk of heart disease and stroke. Read on to learn how you can reduce your sodium intake and increase potassium without completely giving up your favorite snacks and meals.

#### What's the difference between salt and sodium?

**Salt** is the crystal-like compound made from sodium chloride often known as "table salt" that is used as a flavor enhancer and food preservative.

**Sodium** is a dietary mineral that is found either naturally or manufactured into processed foods.

#### Approximately 70% of dietary sodium comes from processed foods. For Example:

- Soups such as instant ramen and canned soups
- Deli meats such as salami and ham
- Processed meats such as hot dogs, bacon, sausage, and chicken tenders
- Pizza
- Snack foods such as chips and salted nuts
- Condiments such as soy sauce and ketchup
- Frozen ready-to-eat meals

#### Tips on How to Reduce Sodium Intake

1. Eating at the dining hall? Check the sodium content of your meal by looking at the nutrition information on the Rutgers app (To access nutrition information, select Food → New Brunswick → Dining Hall Menus → Choose Dining Hall → Click 'Nutrition Info')  
\*\*Try to choose foods with less than 20% of Daily Value (DV) sodium per serving.
2. Increase your potassium intake. High potassium diets are effective at combating hypertension and can reduce the negative effects of sodium. Include high potassium foods in your diet such as avocados, bananas, potatoes, leafy greens, and beans.
3. Provide more flavor with less sodium by using herbs, spices, or citrus (like lemon) to season your food.
4. Enjoy your salty snack or meal but in a smaller portion or less often.

*Have good taste, don't be salty!*

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References: *Guidance for Industry: Voluntary Sodium Reduction Goals*. Available at: <https://www.fda.gov/regulatory-information/search-fda-guidance-documents/guidance-industry-voluntary-sodium-reduction-goals>. Accessed on: October 21, 2021. Salt and Sodium Available at: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/salt-and-sodium/>. Accessed on: October 21, 2021. *Cardiovascular benefits associated with higher dietary K<sup>+</sup> vs. lower dietary Na<sup>+</sup>: evidence from population and mechanistic studies* Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5406991/>. Accessed on: October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021



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