

Health Bubble

CHAMP –SHARING TOMORROWS QUALITY HEALTH TODAY

MARCH 16th to MARCH 22nd 2015

Salt Awareness Week

USES OF SALT (NaCl)

- One of salt's earliest roles was to preserve food (it does this by drawing out water, preventing bacteria from growing).
- Salt was also used to "add" flavour to food
- In colder countries during winter salt is used to prevent ice forming on roads



What role does salt (NaCl, table salt) play in the human body?

The human body is made up of 70% water, a lot of which is found in the fluids that carry red blood cells white cells and helps to carry waste material out of the body. Sodium chloride—also known as salt—is necessary to help your body maintain fluid balance, help your muscles relax and your nerves transmit signals. Sodium chloride also helps maintain normal blood pressure.



What are the best food sources?

Since most of us consume quite enough salt in our diets, this might be one nutrient you need to think about limiting. You can generally assume that fruits, vegetables and legumes are low in sodium unless salt has been added during cooking. (One teaspoon of salt contains about 2,300 milligrams, or 2.3 grams, of sodium.)



How can I cut back?

We acquire a taste for salt and, over time, get used to a certain amount in our diets. If you cut back drastically and suddenly, you may at first find that your food tastes bland. However, flavour doesn't only come from salt. Fresh and dried herbs, spices, black pepper, chilli and lemon are all great ways to add flavour. So while you reduce the amount of salt you eat, substitute it with these other flavour enhancers and you won't notice the loss as much.

It only takes 3 weeks for our taste buds to adapt and become more sensitive to salt, so you get the same flavour impact from less salt.

- *Use less salt when cooking food
- *Do not put salt (raw salt) on food that is already cooked
- *Drink a minimum of 2 litres of water a day
- *Avoid fast food

What happens if you don't get enough?

A sodium chloride deficiency is not likely unless you have been experiencing persistent diarrhoea or vomiting, excessive use of diuretics, or you have kidney problems or other medical conditions that result in loss of sodium (e.g. Hanger over). If it happens, symptoms can include headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, muscle cramps, disorientation and fainting. Excessive fluid intake has been shown to induce a condition called hyponatremia in which sodium is diluted to abnormally low amounts in the body.

What happens if you get too much?

High blood pressure can result from too much salt in the diet, which can increase your risk of heart disease and stroke. Individuals more sensitive to the effects of high salt intakes include those with existing high blood pressure, diabetes, chronic kidney disease; the elderly; and African-Americans. However, it's best to limit salt intakes to recommended levels.

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