

# PRESSURE POINTS



May 2013

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE NEWS YOU CAN USE

## Live Healthier – Eat Less Salt



### Sodium Guidelines

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines recommend that healthy people limit their sodium intake to no more than 2,300 milligrams a day – that is equal to about one teaspoon of salt. For certain populations, the recommendation is even less. If you're 51 years or older, African American, or have high blood pressure, diabetes or kidney disease, experts recommend consuming no more than 1,500 milligrams a day or a little over half a teaspoon of salt! Most Americans consume on average 3,400 milligrams a day – well over the recommended amounts.

### Link between Sodium and High Blood Pressure

Interestingly, the body can subsist on very small amounts of sodium to maintain fluid balance, blood pressure, and muscle and nerve tissue. However, eating too much salt attracts water into the blood vessels, which increases the volume of blood and over time can increase your blood pressure. High blood pressure (also known as hypertension) is a major risk factor for heart disease, kidney disease and stroke. As we age, limiting sodium intake becomes even more important since blood pressure normally rises with age.

### Top Sodium Contributors

Surprisingly, it's not the salt shaker that's the main sodium culprit in our diet. While sodium is found naturally in some foods (like fruits and vegetables), the majority of American's sodium intake comes from salt that has been added to processed food. Below are the top 10 contributors of sodium to our diet:

- Bread and rolls
- Cold cuts/cured meats
- Pizza
- Poultry (such as breaded chicken)
- Soups (such as canned or restaurant soups)
- Sandwiches with condiments (such as hot dogs, hamburgers and submarine sandwiches)
- Cheese
- Pasta mixed dishes (such as lasagna and spaghetti with meat sauce)
- Meat mixed dishes (such as meatloaf, beef stew or chili)
- Snacks (such as popcorn, pretzels, chips and crackers)

### Tips to Reduce Sodium in the Diet

The good news is there are some simple steps you can take to lower the amount of sodium in your diet to achieve your sodium goal and keep your blood pressure in check. Over time, your taste buds will adapt to less salt and you may not even miss it!

- **Fill up on fruits and vegetables.** Fruits and vegetables are high in potassium. Potassium has been shown to reduce high blood pressure in combination with a low sodium diet.
- **Compare product labels.** Read the nutrition facts label to compare products for the least amount of sodium. Choose products that say "No Salt Added" or "Reduced Sodium."

### Questions for Your Health Care Team

- Does my age affect how much salt I should eat?
- Are salt-free seasonings ok to use?

*Continued on next page*

- **Limit eating out to no more than once a week.** Restaurant meals have a lot of salt! For example, a McDonald's Big Mac, fries and shake contain more than 1500 mg of sodium – and that's just for one meal!
- **Prepare more meals at home.** If you make your meal at home you'll be able to better control the amount of sodium in it. Use herbs and spices to add flavor instead of salt, and don't forget to include a helping or two of potassium-rich vegetables!
- **Reduce your intake of bread products and salty snacks.** Choose salads for lunch instead of sandwiches or plain oatmeal for breakfast (which has no salt) instead of toast, waffles or pancakes. Look for unsalted versions of normally salty snacks like nuts and popcorn. Try a piece of fruit and plain yogurt or raw vegetables and hummus if you're looking for something to hold you over between meals.
- **Skip the salt shaker.** Use herbs and spices to enhance the flavor of your meal. Try salt-free seasoning mixes like Mrs. Dash®.

Resources: American Heart Association - [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org); FDA - [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)

## Take a Walk this Spring!



Now that spring is here, it's a great time to get some fresh air and start walking again. Here are just a few ideas to add a little fun to your step:

- Pack a pair of binoculars to bird watch.
- Jazz up your walk with an iPod.
- Ask a friend to help you stay motivated by walking together.
- Add light weights once you have established walking as a routine and you need that extra challenge.
- Reward yourself at the end of your walk with a nutritious lunch or snack!

## 1 DECISION TO TAKE HEART HEALTH SERIOUSLY

Join experts from the UMass Memorial Health Care Heart and Vascular Center of Excellence for two free community education programs focused on keeping your heart healthy! For program topics and information, visit [www.umassmemorial.org/heart](http://www.umassmemorial.org/heart) or call 888-358-6277.

### Recipe for Heart Health: Zucchini Casserole

Courtesy of [mrsdash.com](http://mrsdash.com)

Serves 2; Preparation Time: 10 min; Cooking Time: 15 min

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|-------------------------------|--|
| 1 teaspoon canola oil         | 2 medium zucchini, chopped                           |
| 1 tablespoon dry bread crumbs | 1 tablespoon Mrs. Dash® Lemon Pepper Seasoning Blend |
| 2 egg whites                  | 2 tablespoon Parmesan cheese, grated                 |
| 1/3 cup light sour cream      |  |



Preheat oven to 350°F. Heat oil in large skillet, add zucchini and sauté lightly, approximately three to four minutes, and set aside. Lightly beat egg whites. Mix sour cream, Parmesan cheese, Mrs. Dash® Lemon Pepper and egg whites. Add cooked zucchini to egg mixture. Mix well. Pour into a one quart greased, shallow baking dish. Sprinkle with breadcrumbs and bake in preheated oven for 15 to 20 minutes or until heated through.

### Center for the Advancement of Primary Care



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