

the real dish

with *Lauren*
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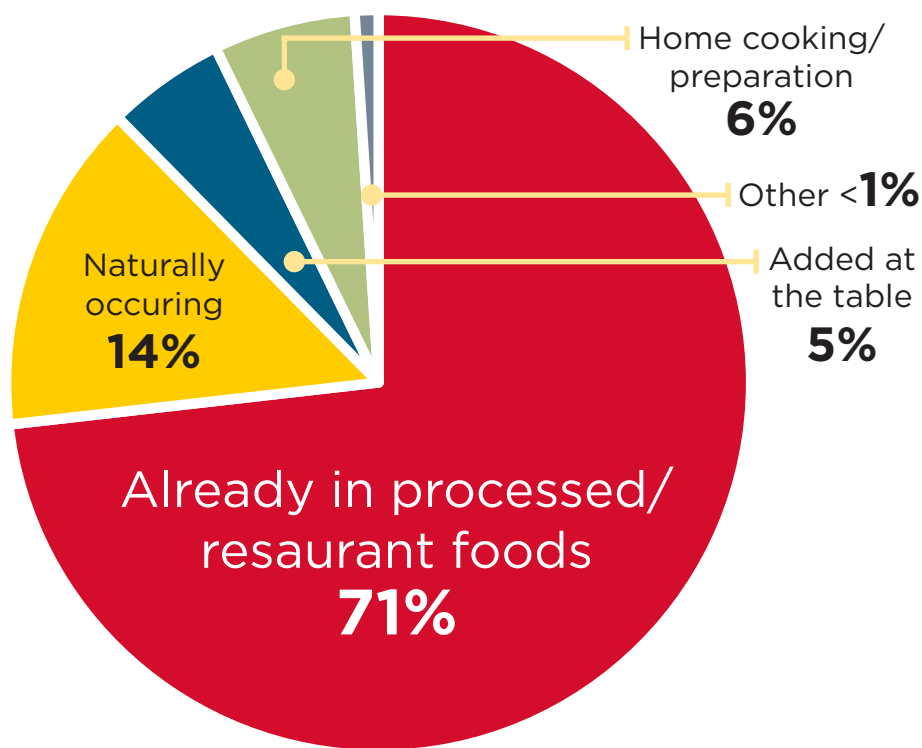
The Nuances of Sodium

WHETHER IT'S HEART disease, diabetes, kidney disease or high blood pressure, reducing sodium intake can be a helpful step for your health.

People often think that if they're not using the salt shaker, they're following a low-sodium diet, but the majority of our sodium intake isn't added at the dining table. Processed foods and restaurant meals are the biggest contributors to sodium in the diet.

The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that adults consume less than 2,300 mg of sodium per day. For some health conditions, your doctor may recommend reducing sodium to less than 1,500 mg per day. Understanding where sodium comes from is an important step in reducing intake.

A common misconception is that using sea/Kosher/Himalayan salt is better than table salt. But sea salt and table salt are both about 40% sodium by weight. Sea salt and Kosher salt typically have larger crystals than table salt,



Most Sodium Consumed Comes from Processed and Restaurant Foods

Source: [CDC website](#)

so you may use less by volume, which could reduce your sodium intake. However, keep in mind that if a processed food is advertising that they use sea salt, it doesn't necessarily mean there's less sodium; always check the Nutrition Facts label to be sure.

The main sources of sodium in the American diet are:

- Breads and rolls
- Pizza
- Sandwiches
- Cold cuts and cured meats
- Soups
- Burritos and tacos
- Chips/popcorn/pretzels
- Chicken
- Cheese
- Eggs and omelets

These 10 foods make up 40% of sodium in the diet, partially due to the accumulative effect: Breads and rolls aren't very high in sodium, but

if you're eating numerous slices or servings a day, your salt intake can add up pretty quickly.

The table below shows the range of sodium in different food items. There's quite a range for the same food items, so checking Nutrition Facts labels is a great way to start finding lower-sodium options.

Tips for Lowering the Salt in Your Diet

So, what's the best way to reduce sodium in your diet? Look for low-sodium options of your favorite products. This can take a bit of time, but once you find your favorites, you won't have to read Nutrition Facts labels every time.

Comparing brands to find the lowest-sodium version can help reduce your overall sodium intake. Choose "low sodium" (140 mg or less per serving), "reduced sodium" (25% less sodium than regular version), or "no added salt" products when available. Studies show that when cooking with lower-sodium ingredients, people only added about 20% of sodium back into their dish...So taking the time to find low-sodium ingredients can have major benefits.

If you're buying a prepared meal, aim for options that have less than 600 mg sodium per meal. Try to reduce the amount of processed, salted, cured or smoked meats you eat on a regular basis. Incorporating fresh or frozen produce (just make sure that there is no added salt or sauces) into your meals can help reduce the overall

Food	Sodium Range (in milligrams)
1 slice white bread	80-230
3 oz turkey breast, deli or prepackaged luncheon meat	450-1,050
4 oz slice frozen pizza, plain cheese, regular crust	370-730
4 oz slice restaurant pizza, plain cheese, regular crust	510-760
4 oz boneless, skinless chicken breast, fresh	40-330
3 oz chicken strips, restaurant, breaded	430-900
3 oz chicken nuggets, frozen, breaded	200-570
1 cup chicken noodle soup, canned, prepared	100-940
1 corn dog, regular	350-620
1 cheeseburger, fast food restaurant	710-1,690
1 oz slice American cheese, processed (packaged or deli)	330-460
1 cup canned pasta with meat sauce	530-980
5 oz pork with barbecue sauce (packaged)	600-1,120
1 oz potato chips, plain	50-200

Source: [CDC website](#)



Higher-Sodium Choices
= **1,522 mg**
per whole sandwich

LOWER-Sodium Choices
= **917 mg**
per whole sandwich

Top slice of bread
200 mg

1 teaspoon mustard
120 mg

1 leaf of lettuce
2 mg

1 slice of cheese
310 mg

6 thin slices of turkey
690 mg

Bottom slice of bread
200 mg

Top slice of bread
110 mg

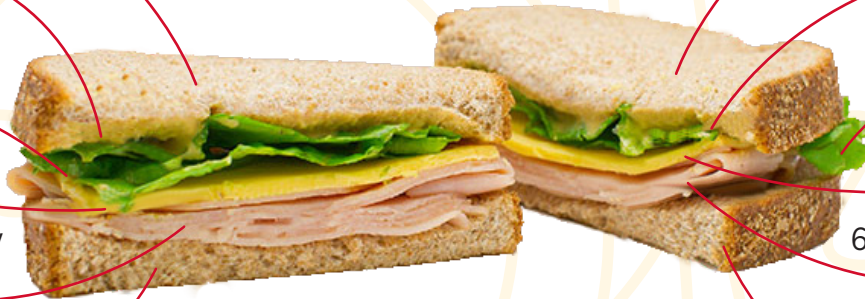
1 teaspoon mustard
120 mg

1 leaf of lettuce
2 mg

1 slice of cheese
135 mg

6 thin slices of turkey
440 mg

Bottom slice of bread
110 mg



Source: [CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov)

Any Way You Slice It: Consider Lower-Salt Options

salt content of your meal and provide added vitamins, phytonutrients and fiber.

Blending In: Tasty Salt Substitutes

If food seems bland, experiment with using citrus, vinegars, herbs and spices to help reduce your salt usage. Taste buds can adapt over time, so make small, incremental changes.



For more information, visit:

- [cdc.gov/salt](https://www.cdc.gov/salt)
- [heart.org/sodium](https://www.heart.org/sodium)
- [knowMSG.com](https://www.knowMSG.com)
- [AICR.org](https://www.AICR.org)

Salt substitutes are an alternative to salt that use potassium instead of sodium to flavor food. However, high potassium intake may not be appropriate with certain medical conditions like CKD, so talk with your doctor before making the switch to a salt substitute.

Monosodium Glutamate (MSG) is another possible option that may help you replace sodium in your diet. MSG has two-thirds less

sodium than table salt, making it a great way to boost flavor with less sodium. MSG is naturally occurring in some foods, or can be added as a flavoring agent. Numerous studies show that MSG is safe in foods, and despite some complaints of sensitivity, symptoms have not been replicated in randomly controlled trials.



Salt-free seasonings, like Mrs. Dash, are another option to season your food, or you can make your own spice blend. Check out various food blogs for ideas on how to create spice blends that add a healthy dash of great taste to your diet. A [Couple Cooks](#)

has a round-up of 15 different blends; and remember when you make it at home you get to control how much salt is added. Reduce salt slowly and your taste buds might not even notice the switch.

Editor's note: The information provided in this newsletter is for educational purposes only. Please speak with your health care team about your specific dietary and health needs.