

Low Sodium Diet for Kidney Disease Patients



What is Sodium?

Sodium is a type of mineral that is important to maintain a proper fluid balance in and around the cells in our body. Salt, which contains 40% sodium, is one of the main sources of sodium in a person's diet. Salt is commonly found in sauces, condiments, preservatives, preserved foods and canned foods.

Sodium & Health

In some people, sodium increases blood pressure because it holds excess fluid in the body, creating an added burden to your heart. Blood pressure rises with age, and eating less sodium now will help curb that rise and reduce your risk of developing other conditions associated with too much sodium, such as stroke, heart failure, osteoporosis, stomach cancer, and kidney disease.

Sodium & Kidney Failure

In kidney failure, your body's ability to maintain a balance of sodium and other minerals is lost. If your diet is high in sodium, the excess sodium in your bloodstream can increase your blood pressure. Uncontrolled blood pressure may lead to heart attacks or strokes. Furthermore, excess sodium can interfere with your blood pressure medications, making them less effective. Excess sodium in the body may also lead to:

- Increased thirst
- Fluid gain, causing swelling of the limbs
- Discomfort during dialysis

To prevent these problems, you may need to limit the amount of sodium in your diet.

What is my daily sodium limit?

One should take in less than 1 teaspoon (5g) of salt daily. This makes up to about 2000mg of sodium in a day.



Sodium content of commonly used seasonings

Sauces/Seasonings	Serving Size	Sodium (mg)
Salt	1 Teaspoon	2000
Stock Cube	1 Teaspoon	920
Salt Substitutes (Potassium Salt)	1 Teaspoon	865
MSG	1 Teaspoon	620
Oyster Sauce	1 Teaspoon	345
Light Soy Sauce	1 Teaspoon	365
Dark Soy Sauce	1 Teaspoon	203
Tomato Sauce	1 Teaspoon	114
Chili Sauce	1 Teaspoon	57

Hidden forms of sodium in foods

Most sodium comes from processed food and is present in many different forms. If the first three ingredients in the food product you buy contain any of these forms of sodium, the product is likely to be high in sodium. Some examples are:

- Rock / Sea / Iodized Salt
- Brine
- Monosodium Glutamate (MSG); (E621)
- Sodium Chloride (NaCl) /Table Salt
- Sodium Bicarbonate (Baking Soda)
- Baking Powder
- Sodium Nitrite
- Sodium Benzoate

What If I eat out?

Many hawker foods can be high in sodium; however there are healthier choices available if you make the right choice.

High Sodium Choices	Sodium (mg)	Lower Sodium Alternatives	Sodium (mg)
1 Plate Chicken Rice *	1049	1 Plate White Rice with Roasted Chicken*	80
1 Small Serving French Fries*	190	1 Baked Potato without Cheese*	17
1 Bowl of Century Egg Porridge*	834	1 Bowl of Porridge with Peanut & Pork*	385
1 Bowl of Mee Siam with Gravy*	2659	1 Bowl of Mee Siam (Without Gravy)*	1008



What about snacks?

Convenient foods/snacks are generally high in sodium. However, lower sodium alternatives are available if you look out for them.

High Sodium Choices	Sodium (mg)	Lower Sodium Alternatives	Sodium (mg)
Curry puff (71g)*	183	Egg Tart (64g)*	75
Steamed Cake (60g)	160	Kuih Lapis (69g)	72
Bubur Cha Cha*	128	Grass Jelly, Chin Chau	53
Cookie with Crème Filling (3 Pieces)	171	Butter Cookie (3 Pieces)	36
Pork Floss Bun* (1 piece)	1328	Sugar Coated Bun (1 piece)	57

My Pantry List

High Sodium Choices	Sodium (mg)	Lower Sodium Alternatives	Sodium (mg)
Luncheon Meat/Ham (1 Slice)*	320	Fresh Lean Meat/Poultry	18
Salted Cabbage (100g)*	1860	Fresh Cabbage (100g)	34
Dried Salted Plums (50g)*	990	1 Small Fresh Plum	1
Curry Flavoured Instant Noodles (83g)	1498	Instant Noodles w/o any seasoning, with natural herbs (Parsley, Garlic & Pepper) (83g)	234
Salted Butter (50g)	357	Unsalted Butter (50g)	18
Tuna in Brine (100g)	298	Tuna in Water (100g)	152

* For renal patients, watch out as these foods can be high in Potassium and/or Phosphate

Tips to reduce Sodium Intake

- Limit sodium rich food like processed food such as luncheon meat or hot dogs and choose fresh vegetables, poultry and meat.
- When cooking at home, use whole spices, lemon juice or natural seasonings such as shallots, onions, garlic and parsley to spice up your cooking instead of adding table salt.
- Only add salt or sauces sparingly after cooking. If necessary, taste the food before salt is added.
- Salt substitutes are not suitable for renal patients as they are high in potassium.
- Avoid having pickles, sambal belacaan, papadum or chutneys with your meals.
- Minimize the number of times you eat out as most food sold outside is highly salted.
- When dining out, ask for less gravy, avoid drinking the soup and limit preserved foods such as salted egg and salted fish. Also remember to request for freshly cooked items without salt, MSG or soy sauce.
- When purchasing foods, choose foods that have the 'Healthier Choice' symbol or those labeled 'Low in Sodium' or 'No Added Salt'.
- Read food labels to compare similar foods per 100g and choose the lower sodium version.

