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# HEALTHY CHOICES

## FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES

### TOPIC

## SODIUM

It's clear that Americans have a taste for salt, but salt plays a role in high blood pressure. Everybody, along with kids, should cut their sodium intake to less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium a day (close to 1 teaspoon of salt). Adults age 51 and older, African Americans of any age, and people with high blood pressure, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease should further lower their sodium intake to 1,500 milligrams a day.



### INSIDE

- Basic Budget Bites
- Food Facts: Tips to cut sodium in your food
- Recipe: Rainbow Veggie Salad
- Recipe: Sweet and Sour Vegetables
- Smart Tips: Cooking with kids
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### PARENT'S POW-WOW

Put that salt shaker down! Many people will get their plate full, reach for the salt shaker before tasting any food, and salt their whole plate. Try to break this habit. Don't put the salt shaker on the table. If it is on the table, don't reach for it until you have tasted the food. Many canned items are high in sodium because of the canning process. These foods don't need any extra salt. As a matter of fact, it would be better to make food from scratch and control the amount of sodium. A big lesson here is to teach your children not to reach for the salt shaker.

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## BASIC BUDGET BITES



- Think fresh. Fresh foods are lower in sodium.
- Enjoy homemade foods. Cook more often at home, where you are in control of what is in your food. Making your own food allows you to limit the amount of salt in them.
- Eat plenty of veggies and fruits, they are, of course, low in sodium.
- Read the label. Find packaged and canned foods lower in sodium. Look for “low sodium,” “reduced sodium,” or “no salt added,” on labels.



## FOOD FACTS

### TIPS TO CUT SODIUM IN YOUR FOOD

**M**ost Americans eat more salt than they need. The present advice is to eat less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium a day. That is about 1 teaspoon of table salt a day.

Follow these tips to cut sodium in your food:

- Remove the salt shaker from the table.
- Watch for disguised sodium in products such as monosodium glutamate (MSG) and sodium bicarbonate (baking soda).
- Read food labels. They tell you the amount of sodium per serving.
- Replace processed foods with fresh choices. The more processed the food is, the more sodium it may contain.
- Season foods with herbs and spices rather than salt.
- Use vegetable oil instead of butter or margarine in cooking.

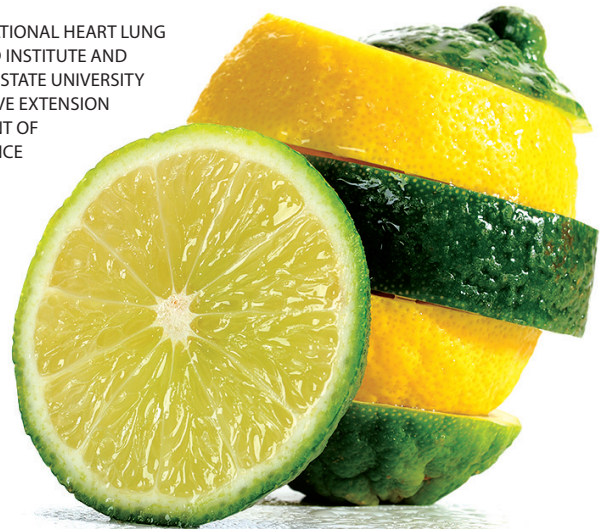
When you first start making foods without salt, they may taste bland to you. Don't cut salt out all at one time. Try slowly using less salt at the table and when making foods. The taste of salt is learned – you find

that you like it, so you use more and more. If it can be learned, it can also be unlearned!

There are many ways to add flavor to your food without using salt. Use this list to help you get started:

- Garlic or onion powder (not salt)
- Minced dried onion
- Dried or fresh herbs
- Lime or lemon juice
- Cilantro

SOURCE: NATIONAL HEART LUNG  
AND BLOOD INSTITUTE AND  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION  
DEPARTMENT OF  
FOOD SCIENCE  
& HUMAN  
NUTRITION



## COOKING WITH KIDS

### RAINBOW VEGGIE SALAD

- **1 (15.5 ounce) can red kidney beans (drained and rinsed)**
- **1 (15.5 ounce) can black beans (drained and rinsed)**
- **3 carrots (scrubbed and sliced)**
- **1 yellow squash (small, washed and sliced)**
- **1 zucchini (small, washed and sliced)**
- **½ cup light Italian dressing**
- **½ teaspoon pepper**

- 1.** Mix all the vegetables together in a large bowl.
- 2.** Pour dressing over vegetables.

- 3.** Sprinkle with pepper.
- 4.** Stir gently, coating all vegetables.
- 5.** Cover and refrigerated at least 8 hours.

**Nutrition Facts per serving:** 90 calories, 2 g total fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 250 mg sodium, 14 g total carbohydrate, 5 g dietary fiber, 2 g sugars, 4 g protein

**Yield:** 10 servings

SOURCE: USDA RECIPE FINDER

## RECIPE

### SWEET AND SOUR VEGETABLES

- **1 tablespoon honey**
- **1 tablespoon lemon juice**
- **1 teaspoon light soy sauce**
- **¼ teaspoon ginger**
- **1 cup pineapple or orange juice**
- **1 tablespoon cornstarch**
- **2 teaspoons oil**
- **1 pound frozen stir-fry vegetables (or use fresh)**

- 1.** Combine all ingredients except vegetables into bowl, mix, and set aside.
- 2.** Heat 2 teaspoons of oil in skillet and add frozen vegetables. Cook for 3-4 minutes or until vegetables are crisp-tender.
- 3.** Add sweet and sour sauce, and cook for another 2 minutes or until mixture comes to a boil.
- 4.** Serve immediately. This dish is great over pasta or brown rice.

**Nutrition Facts per serving:** 80 calories, 1.5 g total fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 50 mg sodium, 13 g total carbohydrate, 1 g dietary fiber, 5 g sugars, 1 g protein

**Yield:** 6 servings

SOURCE: USDA  
RECIPE FINDER



## LOCAL EVENTS

### SMART TIPS: MAKE COOKING COOL FOR KIDS

1. Plan meals and snacks with kids. Kids think the kitchen is an exciting and magical place. For small children, eating becomes something much more special when “I got to pick it out.” It’s even better when “I made it myself.”
2. Teach kids kitchen safety. All children need adult supervision in the kitchen. Tell them what is okay to touch. Remind them of items that could be risky. Set kitchen rules. Here are some ideas: Never touch a hot stove, be careful with knives, wash your hands often, keep all surfaces clean.
3. Involve kids in fixing tasty recipes. There are safe kitchen tasks for

kids of all ages. A preschooler can stir ingredients that have already been measured. An elementary age child can read the recipe, measure, and mix. Tweens can learn to cut, chop, and dice safely. Teens may be able to try techniques from a TV cooking show.

4. Make it a special event with an appealing table. Children are proud when they make a dish all by themselves. A fruit salad or sandwich is a good place to start. Put their creation on a “fancy” plate. They will be more likely to try cooking again!

SOURCE: EAT SMART, MOVE MORE, NC



**If you are interested in nutrition classes, contact your extension office.**

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