

Eat Well Practices

Sodium Reduction Fact Sheet



Live Well San Diego is the [County of San Diego](#) (COSD) vision of a region that is Building Better Health, Living Safely, and Thriving. To help achieve this vision, the COSD developed guidance for all food and beverages that the County offers.

The **Eat Well Practices** help COSD bring about positive change and model what it means to live well. One important strategy in healthy food and beverage guidance for COSD is reducing the amount of sodium (generally consumed as salt) in foods sold and served in cafeterias and other County-owned and operated meal serving sites.

Why Is Sodium Reduction Important?

HEALTH

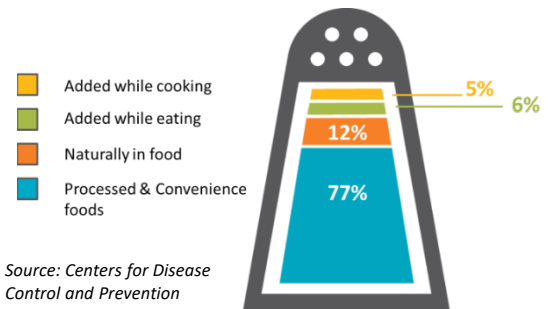
The average American eats a lot of salt, resulting in the consumption of **twice** as much sodium as the daily recommended amount (1,500 - 2,300 mg per day). This may lead to high blood pressure, which can cause heart disease and stroke, and contributes to nearly **1,000 American deaths per day**.

1 in 3 U.S. adults has high blood pressure (i.e., hypertension)



DID YOU KNOW?

Salt is the main source of sodium in the American Diet, and most comes from processed foods.



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

ECONOMY



If Americans lowered salt intake to the recommended value, the U.S. could:



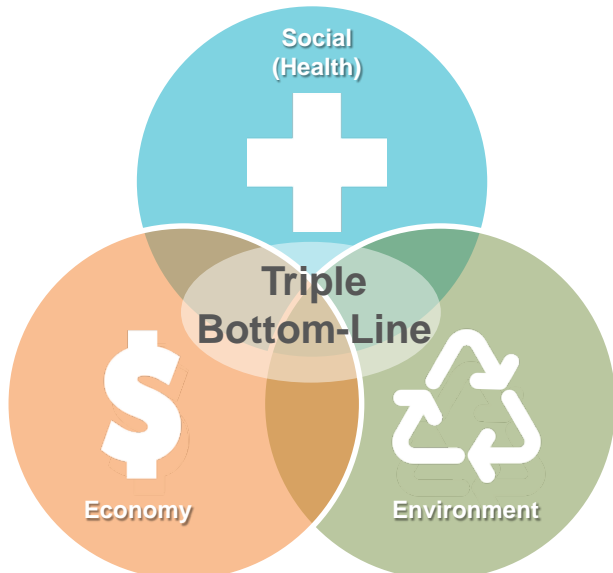
Eliminate 11 million cases of hypertension



Save \$18 billion in healthcare dollars

Triple Bottom-Line

Through strategies like sodium reduction, the *Eat Well Practices* will support positive choices and build better health, economy, and environmental stewardship, which affect the triple bottom-line. (Source: [Indiana Business Review](#))



HEALTH: COSD serves more than 10 million meals per year including meals to high-risk populations. These meals may be their only source of food. A low-sodium diet can significantly improve health.

ECONOMY: High blood pressure costs San Diego County \$638 million per year (~\$1,000 per person) in diagnosis-related healthcare treatment. Low sodium options can reduce healthcare costs and increase supply and demand for low-sodium options.

ENVIRONMENT: Sodium reduction strategies that flavor foods with herbs and spices and replace processed foods with whole foods can reduce the carbon footprint of a meal, particularly when ingredients are sourced close to home.

Sodium Reduction

How Can Eat Well Practices Help Reduce Sodium Intake?

The *Eat Well Practices* increase the number of low-sodium choices available in County cafeterias, congregate and custodial meals (e.g., group foster homes, jails, senior nutrition programs), and vending machines, as well as at County-hosted meetings and events. Strategies include:

- using more whole and fresh food in place of processed items;
- procuring lower sodium versions of commonly used ingredients, such as canned tomatoes and soup bases;
- flavoring dishes with herbs, spices, vinegars, and citrus juices instead of salt;
- changing preparation practices to eliminate the use of unnecessary salt; and
- educating consumers about healthier choices available.

What You Can Do

You can support efforts to reduce sodium consumption and the *Eat Well Practices* by:

- working with your colleagues to develop a worksite *Meet Well Pledge*;
- participating in *Eat Well Practices* activities; and
- visiting the *Eat Well Practices* web page.

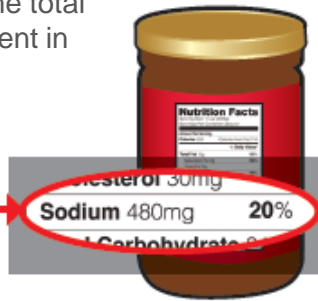
Sodium Reduction Guide

If you are interested in learning more about how you can reduce the amount of sodium in your diet, review the guide below adapted from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Use the Percent Daily Value (%DV) to Compare Products

The %DV tells you whether a particular nutrient in food contributes a little or a lot to the total recommended amount of that nutrient in your total daily diet.

20%DV (480 mg) or more of sodium per serving is **high**



You can also check the front of the food package to quickly identify foods that may contain less sodium. For example, look for foods with claims such as:

Salt/Sodium-Free	Less than 5 mg of sodium per serving
Very Low Sodium	35 mg of sodium or less per serving
Low Sodium	140 mg of sodium or less per serving
Reduced Sodium	At least 25% less sodium than in the original product
Light in Sodium or Lightly Salted	At least 50% less sodium than the regular product
No-Salt-Added or Unsalted	No salt is added during processing, but not necessarily sodium-free. Check the Nutrition Facts Label to be sure!

DID YOU KNOW?

The %DV listed on nutrition labels is for one serving, but many packages contain more than one serving. Look at the serving size and how many servings you are actually consuming—if you eat two servings, you are eating double the %DV (twice as much sodium).

