[IMAGE]

Sodium on the Loose

By Editorial Staff

What's wrong with a little <u>sodium</u>? Nothing; in fact, sodium is an essential nutrient that regulates blood pressure, blood volume, osmotic equilibrium and pH. If your body gets less than 500 mg of sodium daily, you could be in trouble; on the other hand, far too many people exceed that minimum requirement by several thousand milligrams, if not more.

A recent study points to some of the potential causes of excess sodium in the American diet: meat mixed dishes and salad dressings / vegetable oils. The study, which evaluated sodium content in major U.S. brands of packaged foods, determined that average sodium content (per serving) in meat mixed dishes was 966 mg, and more than 1,000 mg per serving in salad dressings / vegetable oils.

<u>sodium - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark</u> Of course, that's not to excuse many of the other packaged foods, which had less (but still too much) sodium per serving, keeping in mind that the FDA's "upper safe limit" for sodium intake is only 2,300 mg a day from all sources.

If <u>your diet</u> is primarily whole-grain, fresh foods, then sodium likely isn't a problem unless you're topping your dishes with copious amounts of salt. On the other hand, if packaged, processed and/or restaurant fare is the core of your diet, you could be consuming way too much sodium, increasing your risk of high blood pressure and related health issues. Talk to your doctor for more information.

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