

[IMAGE]

The Good Side to Sodium

By Editorial Staff

When we hear the word *sodium*, most of us immediately think about salt (which is actually sodium chloride) and about how too much of it can lead to health problems such as high blood pressure. And while that's true, there's much more to sodium than you might think, including some important benefits.

Sodium is a soft, highly reactive metal that does not occur in nature as a free metal, although it's the sixth most abundant mineral in the Earth's crust. Because it is so reactive, sodium combines easily with other elements to create compounds (sodium chloride, for example).

Sodium is important for several key reasons. In the human body, it helps keep fluids in normal balance by regulating cellular osmotic pressure. It also helps maintain blood volume and blood pressure by attracting and holding water.

When it comes to sodium intake and our eating habits, we get into trouble because many of the processed, packaged and restaurant / fast foods we eat contain far too much sodium. In fact, we really only need about 500 mg a day, if that, in order to function properly. That said, the average American consumes about 3,500 mg a day.

To learn more about the scientific side of sodium, [click here](#). For information on how consuming too much sodium can get you in trouble – and some of the major dietary culprits – [click here](#).

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