

[IMAGE]

## Time for Less Sodium

By Editorial Staff

If the average American tabulated their daily sodium (salt) intake, they'd probably be floored - approximately 3,400 milligrams a day. When you consider that the recommended daily limit is more than 1,000 mg below that number, you can see the problem. Add to that the health consequences of excess sodium intake, including high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke, and you can see why addressing sodium, namely by reducing how much we consume every day, is so critical.

A recent paper published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* titled, "Reducing Sodium Intake in the US: Healthier Lives, Healthier Future," emphasizes the necessity and potential health benefits of reducing sodium intake. According to the authors, who rely on data from several major sources including *What We Eat in America*, the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) 2013-2016; and *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025*, reducing average daily sodium intake to 3,000 mg/day (still substantially above the 2,300 mg/day recommendation, but at least a start) "could produce large public health benefits, resulting in reduced morbidity and mortality as well as cost savings."

sodium - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark The 3,000 mg/day limit is a short-term target goal issued by the Food and Drug Administration for industry - significant because industry (e.g., the companies that make all the preprepared and/or packaged foods Americans increasingly eat) is often the culprit when it comes to the sodium problem. In fact, as the authors state, "More than 70% of sodium intake in the US is from packaged food and food prepared away from home, including restaurants and food service operations; just 11% of sodium intake is from sodium added at the table or in cooking at home and almost all of the rest is inherent in foods."

So, while we wait for restaurants, fast-food chains, frozen-food manufacturers and others to change their sodium habits, what can you do to kick-start your life without (as much) sodium? Easy: prepare more food at home from scratch, where you can control how much salt you flavor your foods with (if any at all). Let's start kicking sodium to the curb and reap the health benefits in the process.

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