



This Month's Focus: Shaking the Salt Habit

This newsletter is produced by the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington*, to enhance communication and coordination among those who educate Washington families about nutrition and food. *Energize* shares brief information about programs and materials that support healthful and enjoyable eating.

Tell Us What's New...

What's new with your organization? To submit news to *Energize*, call Martha Marino 206-817-1466, e-mail martha_marino@yahoo.com.

Deadline for submission is the last day of each month.

Subscription Information

Energize can be sent to you electronically each month. There is no charge.

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For more information about the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington* or to access past issues of this newsletter, see <http://nutrition.wsu.edu>.

When it comes to sodium intake, the difference between where we are and where we need to be is vast. The estimated average intake of sodium for all Americans two years of age and older is approximately 3,400 mg of sodium/day. The *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend reducing

intake to 2300 mg/day or less. But their directive goes further: half of the country's population is at higher risk for cardiovascular disease and must further reduce sodium intake to 1500 mg/day. At greatest risk are people 51 years and older, all African Americans (including children and teens), and anyone with hypertension, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease.



Wellington Images

Salting food at the table isn't the problem, really. Sodium chloride in the salt shaker provides just a tiny fraction of the sodium we consume. The rest comes in processed foods, and not just for flavor. As a food ingredient, it has many important chemical functions, such as curing meat, helping yeast work in baked products, preserving cheese, maintaining texture in canned foods, extending shelf life of processed foods, and many, many other properties.

Nutrition educators face an enormous challenge to help the people we serve gradually reduce their sodium intake to the recommended levels. Currently, fewer than 15% of the US population meets the 1500 mg/day target. In this issue of the *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators*, we examine recommendations and resources to help consumers shake the salt habit.

Salt-Reducing Strategies from the IOM – The Institutes of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academies was asked by Congress to develop tactics to reduce levels to those recommended in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The resulting report, *Strategies to Reduce Sodium Intake in the United States*, outlines the functional properties of sodium in food products, explores consumers' desire for salty taste, and suggests changes by food manufacturers and government agencies. The report notes that, after 40 years of trying to persuade Americans to lower their salt intake, they continue to consume more than they should. Apparently the change can't be made by nutrition education alone. The IOM writes, "On balance, consumer-based initiatives without a concomitant change in the overall food supply and without considerations related to changing salt taste preference are likely to be inadequate to address the public health problem" (page 236). (Free online version of the report is available at: http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12818#toc.)



ENERGIZE YOUR LIFE!
EAT HEALTHY-BE ACTIVE

Information provided by Washington State University Extension's NEN of WA. This material was funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact your local DSHS Community Service Office.

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Resources for Nutrition Educators:

- § The *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* offers strategies to reduce sodium intake, and increase potassium intake at <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/DietaryGuidelines/2010/PolicyDoc/PolicyDoc.pdf> page 68, with more information on sodium recommendations on pages 21-24.
- § Slides about sodium with some good visuals are included in USDA's presentation on the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, www.dietaryguidelines.gov, see chapter 3, slides 3 through 6.
- § University of Nebraska's Nutrition Education Program has a fun quiz that can be taken online or printed as a pdf called *Test Your Salt Savvy* at <http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/salt-savvy>. Also on that link are recipes and additional handouts.
- § The International Food and Information Council offers simple tips for consumers. Although published in 2009, they are still relevant, http://www.foodinsight.org/Newsletter/Detail.aspx?topic=Quick_Tips_to_Be_Sodium_Savvy.
- § Also published in 2009, USDA's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion has a downloadable handout, *Salt and Sodium, 10 Tips to Cut Back* at www.mypyramid.gov/downloads/TenTips/SodiumTipsheet.pdf.

Reducing Sodium in Canned Beans – For many years, nutrition educators have advised draining and rinsing canned beans in order to reduce their sodium content. In a soon-to-be-published article, researchers provide the first definitive data to back up this recommendation. They found that just draining, as well as draining and rinsing, canned beans significantly reduces sodium levels. An interesting finding was that there was little difference between draining and rinsing compared to draining alone. A half-cup serving of canned beans provides 21% of the Daily Value (DV) for sodium. By draining the beans, more than one-third of the sodium can be reduced; the drained beans provide 13% DV for sodium. Draining and rinsing reduces slightly more, resulting in 12% DV. Five brands of each of five types of beans were evaluated; results did not vary significantly by bean variety. The new study affirms the recommendation to drain or drain and rinse beans, which are an inexpensive source of protein, fiber, and other valuable nutrients. (Source: Duyff, R, JR Mount, and JB Jones, "Sodium reduction in canned beans after draining, rinsing," *Journal of Culinary Science and Technology*, 9(2), (in press).)

Beans – Dry or Canned? – For consumers who have the time and inclination to soak dry beans, then cook them for an hour or two, they can consume beans with even less sodium than canned beans. A recent study found that cooked dry beans provided 0.1% DV for sodium. By using dry beans, consumers can save a slight amount of money at the store, although the energy use to cook the beans might need to be factored in: the average price per serving for cooked beans was 12 cents, and for canned beans was 32 cents. Authors note that 60% of beans consumed in the United States are canned. (Source: Zanovec, M et al, "Comparison of nutrient density and nutrient-to-cost between cooked and canned beans," *Food and Nutrition Sciences*, April 2011, published online at www.scirp.org/journal/PaperInformation.aspx?paperID=4521.)

Reducing Sodium in Cheese – In cheese, salt influences safety and shelf life, body, texture, flavor, activity of enzymes and microorganisms, residual lactose, pH, "meltability", elasticity of the curd, functions of certain proteins, and more. The issues go beyond the flavor that salt provides. Cheesemakers are working to make cheese lower in salt, trying to overcome the consequences of lower sodium such as bitter taste, weak flavor, and "pasty" body. A recent paper looked at the functions of salt in cheese and analyzed the amount of sodium in a variety of cheeses. They found that manufacturers of Cheddar and Mozzarella need to make small changes to reach healthful sodium targets, but those who make string cheese and process cheese will have a tougher time. Although a source of sodium, cheese provides protein and two of the nutrients that Dietary Guidelines state that Americans under-consume: calcium and potassium. (Source: Agarwal, S et al, "Sodium content in retail cheddar, mozzarella, and process cheeses varies considerably in the United States," *Journal of Dairy Science* 94(3):1605-1615, March 2011.)

Sodium and Asthma? We're well aware of the importance of limiting sodium intake for heart health, and in diabetes and renal disease, but can asthma be added to the list? A recent study found a connection among children between salty-snack consumption and increased incidence of asthmatic symptoms. (Source; Arvanti, F et al, "Salty-snack eating, television or video-game viewing, and asthma symptoms among 10- to 12-year-old children: the PANACEA study," *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 111(2): 251-255, February 2011.)

IN THE MEDIA

Child Nutrition Programs May Use Local Foods – The USDA now allows federal child nutrition programs to purchase unprocessed and locally grown or locally raised agricultural products by applying for an optional geographic preference during the institution's procurement process. The new option goes into effect this month. (Source: *Federal Register*, <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2011/2011-9843.htm>.)

OUR MISSION: *The Nutrition Education Network* coordinates nutrition education efforts to communicate consistent, positive and relevant messages to increase awareness of healthful and enjoyable eating among low-income families. *Energize* is one way that *the Network* shares information and resources to accomplish this mission.

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TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Map the Meal Gap – Where are the pockets of food insecurity in our country? How about in our communities? In order to better identify strategies to alleviate hunger, an organization called Feeding America undertook a study to evaluate food insecurity, meal cost, and other factors that reflect the need for food. The result is a well-researched, interactive online tool, *Map the Meal Gap 2011*. By moving your cursor over the map, you can compare the rate of food insecurity and the cost of a meal (cost is determined from meal cost among persons who are not food insecure) state-by-state, county-by-county, and even by food bank. In Washington State, the average cost of a meal was \$2.59, and 14.8% of our state's population is food insecure. Of food insecure persons, 61% were below the SNAP income threshold and 39% were above that threshold, which is valuable to know in that at even slightly higher incomes, people are hungry. The report was released March 2011 and uses data from 2009. Feeding America is the nation's largest hunger-relief charity in the United States, including more than 200 food banks. (Source: <http://feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/hunger-studies/map-the-meal-gap.aspx>.)

A related tool is USDA's *Food Desert Locator*, an online mapping tool that identifies low-income census tracts where a large proportion of residents have low access to a supermarket or large grocery store. In urban areas, low access means the store is a mile or more away; in rural areas, it's 10 miles or more. www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=2011/05/0191.xml

DID YOU KNOW?

Table salt is a fine-grained refined salt with additives that help it flow. Most table salt is *iodized salt*, meaning that sodium iodine has been added, important in the prevention of hypothyroidism. *Kosher salt* is an additive-free, coarse-grained salt that does not have iodine or other additives, and is increasingly more commonly used in recipes for consumers and among gourmet cooks who prefer its texture and flavor.

Because our readers have told us that Family Meals is a hot topic, in the May issue we begin a small section on recent news relating to this topic and our signature program, Eat Together, Eat Better.

Dads Influence Family Meals – Recent research has shown that Fathers play one of the largest roles in influencing children's use of fast food and full service restaurants. If dad used fast-food and full-service restaurants, so did the kids. Also, if fathers considered meals to be an important family ritual, kids ate out less. A Father's day Surprise: Have kids tuck a recipe card into their Father's Day cards (June 19) along with a note about how much they look forward to eating together as a family. (Source: A McIntosh et al, "Determinants of children's use of and time spent in fast-food and full-service restaurants," *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 43(3):142-149, May/June 2011.)

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