



American Heart Association®

Hard Hats with Heart™



Toolbox Talks

Where Does All the Sodium Come From?

Where does all the sodium come from?

Table salt is a combination of two minerals — about 40% sodium and 60% chloride.

Here are the approximate amounts of sodium in a given amount of salt:

- 1/4 teaspoon salt = 575 mg sodium
- 1/2 teaspoon salt = 1,150 mg sodium
- 3/4 teaspoon salt = 1,725 mg sodium
- 1 teaspoon salt = 2,300 mg sodium

More than 70% of the sodium we consume comes from packaged, prepared and restaurant foods. The rest of the sodium in the diet occurs naturally in food (about 15 percent) or is added when we're cooking food or sitting down to eat (about 11 percent). So even if you never use the salt shaker, you're probably getting too much sodium.

Because most of the sodium you eat is in your food before you buy it, it can be hard to limit how much you're getting. But you deserve to choose how much sodium you eat. An AHA survey found that about three-quarters of adults in the U.S. prefer less sodium in processed and restaurant foods.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What are FDA sodium targets?

The FDA and the AHA support volunteer sodium targets for the food industry. So what do they really mean for you?

Food manufacturing companies and restaurants that adopt the targets will lower the amount of sodium in their foods to meet the new targets. That means healthier foods for you and millions of other consumers. It'll be easier to make the healthy choice.

Discussion Questions:

- Do you check nutrition labels for sodium?
- What have you tried to reduce your sodium consumption?