



American Heart Association.

EmPOWERED to Serve™

Break Up with Excess Sodium

LESSON PLAN

Call to Action

Reducing the amount of sodium in your diet can help you lower or avoid high blood pressure, which reduces your risk for heart disease and stroke. Make a pledge to reduce the sodium you and your loved ones consume and invite others in your social networks to join you in pledging to reduce their salt intake. Visit heart.org/sodium to learn more.

Community Need

Our bodies need some salt for normal functioning. However, if you're like most Americans, you're probably getting much more than your body needs (even if you never pick up the saltshaker). Over time, this can damage your heart and blood vessels. It can even put you at risk for heart attack and stroke. So, kiss excess salt goodbye! And, be assured that even with less sodium, food can still be full of flavor.

- Consider these facts:
 - Nine out of 10 Americans consume too much sodium.
 - Sodium added to food outside the home accounts for more than two-thirds of total sodium intake in the U.S.
 - More than 70% of sodium consumed is from processed, packaged and restaurant foods.
 - High blood pressure (HBP) among blacks is among the highest in the U.S. as well as worldwide.
- In the U.S.:
 - Over 57% of non-Hispanic blacks have HBP.
 - Among Hispanics, 44 percent have HBP.
 - Over 41% of Asian Americans have HBP.
- By limiting your sodium intake, you can:
 - Help reduce your risk of HBP.
 - Help control your blood pressure if you have HBP.



Three Important Points

Our lives are very busy and many of us are on information overload. That's why we'll focus on three key messages:

- Understand how sodium (salt) affects your health.
- Learn about common sources of sodium.
- Identify steps to help reduce your sodium intake.

Preparing for the Lesson

- Budget at least 30 minutes to present the lesson.
- Review the speaker notes prior to the lesson to be familiar with the information and know what additional resources are used.
- If handouts are referenced in the presentation, we recommend distributing the pages prior to beginning the lesson.
- Additional resources are available on the Resources List pdf. These could be added to lengthen the presentation or provide ideas for small group discussion. You may also provide the Resources List pdf to the attendees so they have links to information discussed in the lesson.

Program Materials

No access to a slide projector? Print out the slides and put them in a three-ring binder. Use the printed slides as a script to deliver your health lesson.

- Flip chart and markers.
- Handouts (one copy per participant):
 - How Too Much Sodium Affects Your Health Infographic <http://bit.ly/38sDmIJ>
 - Salty 6 Infographic <http://bit.ly/37thMCC>
 - Check for the Heart-Check Mark Infographic <http://bit.ly/31UsEli>
- Pens
- Goody bags (optional): Reach out to local businesses such as hospitals, wellness centers, local clinics and other health organizations. Ask them about donating giveaways for participants. Also check out the American Heart Association online store (shopheart.org) for giveaways to buy in bulk.



Audiovisual Needs

- Projector for PowerPoint slides.
- Internet connection (optional).

Wrap-Up

Reminder! Once your participants have left, be sure to complete the Ambassador Questionnaire.

Slide Program with Talking Points and Discussion Questions

The “Presenters Notes” section of the PowerPoint presentation includes scripted comments for the lesson. Use these to help walk through the lesson. To engage participants, the talking points also include discussion questions. For your reference, here is a list of the discussion questions:

- Does anyone in your family have high blood pressure?
- Did any of the foods on the list surprise you?
- How many of you read the food label before you buy a food item?
- What do you think the best choices would be for reduced sodium?