### Lowering Sodium in School Foods

The recommended maximum sodium for school-age kids is between 1,900 and 2,300 milligrams (mg) per day. Most children need only 1,500 mg of sodium per day.

The chart shows an example of what a middle-school lunch could look like before sodium standards were added, after changes in 2014, and when the next changes would occur in 2017. All menus meet calorie guidelines for middle schools.

### Old School Lunch
- No sodium standards specified
- Menu Item | Sodium (mg)
- Cheeseburger | 470
- Pickle | 280
- Tator Tots | 310
- Ketchup | 300
- Cookie | 40
- Grapes | 0
- Low-fat Milk | 110
- Total | 1,510

### Current School Lunch
- Sodium target: <1,360 mg
- Menu Item | Sodium (mg)
- Hamburger | 260
- Pickle | 280
- Baked Beans | 140
- Carrot Sticks | 40
- Ranch Dip | 270
- Cookie | 40
- Grapes | 0
- Low-fat Milk | 110
- Total | 1,140

### Target 2: <1,035 mg (effective July 2017)
- Menu Item | Sodium (mg)
- Hamburger | 260
- Baked Beans (USDA Foods) | 140
- Carrot Sticks | 40
- Ranch Dip | 270
- Cookie | 40
- Grapes | 0
- Low-fat Milk | 110
- Total | 860

### Tips from School Food Service Directors
- Serve a Hamburger instead of a cheeseburger
- Swap Frozen for canned vegetables
- Use Mozzarella instead of American cheese
- Add "No Salt Added" Diced Tomatoes to tomato soup
- Add Herbs and Spices to rice instead of margarine or salt
- Serve Carrot Sticks instead of a pickle
- Serve Baby Carrots with Ranch Dip instead of tater tots with ketchup
- Switch from regular to USDA Foods Vegetarian Baked Beans
- Serve an unbreaded instead of a Breadcrided Chicken Patty

The difference between 2014 and 2017 levels is 325 mg, similar to the amount saved by switching from a commercially-prepared version of baked beans to a USDA Foods version or from tater tots with ketchup to baby carrots with ranch dip.

Estimated Sodium Savings (mg) per Serving

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Savings (mg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheeseburger</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pickle</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tator Tots</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ketchup</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapes</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sodium content of menu items were estimated based on food composition data from manufacturers and USDA’s National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference Release 27. The American Heart Association acknowledges the Center for Science in the Public Interest for its contributions to the development of this infographic.

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### BREAKFAST SODIUM REDUCTION TIMELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Group</th>
<th>School Year 2014-2015 (mg)</th>
<th>School Year 2017-2018 (mg)</th>
<th>School Year 2022-2023 (mg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>≤540</td>
<td>≤485</td>
<td>≤430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>≤600</td>
<td>≤535</td>
<td>≤470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>≤640</td>
<td>≤570</td>
<td>≤500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### LUNCH SODIUM REDUCTION TIMELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Group</th>
<th>School Year 2014-2015 (mg)</th>
<th>School Year 2017-2018 (mg)</th>
<th>School Year 2022-2023 (mg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>≤1,230</td>
<td>≤935</td>
<td>≤640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>≤1,360</td>
<td>≤1,035</td>
<td>≤710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>≤1,420</td>
<td>≤1,080</td>
<td>≤740</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The recommended *maximum* sodium for school-age kids is between 1,900 and 2,300 milligrams (mg) per day. Most children need *only* 1,500 mg of sodium per day.

Kids get 30% of their daily sodium at lunch.

References:
- CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report Volume 63 (2014); Institute of Medicine Dietary Reference Intakes for Sodium (2005);
- USDA Final Rule: Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs (2012)

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