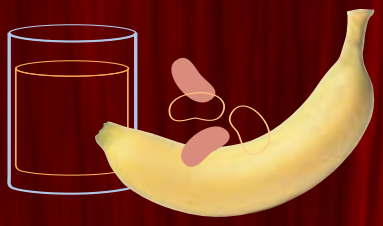
Health Facts



Sodium and Potassium

Nearly all Americans eat too much salt (sodium). Most of the salt comes from eating processed foods (75%), or adding salt to food while cooking and using the salt shaker at meals (5% to 10%). On average, the more salt a person eats, the higher his or her blood pressure. Eating less salt is an important way to reduce the risk of high blood pressure, which may in turn reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, congestive heart failure, and kidney damage. To reduce the amount of sodium in your diet, eat less processed food and use less salt while cooking and at the table.

Other lifestyle changes may prevent or delay getting high blood pressure and may help lower elevated blood pressure. These include eating more potassium-rich foods, losing excess weight, being more physically active, eating a healthy diet, and limiting alcoholic beverages, if you choose to drink them.

Did you know that sodium and potassium both impact blood pressure? A diet rich in potassium helps to counterbalance some of sodium's harmful effects on blood pressure.

Foods that are good sources of potassium are listed in the Food Sources of Potassium table on the next page.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

You should get no more than 2,300 milligrams of sodium each day. Some people should get less.

Here are some tips for eating less salt:

- When you're choosing packaged foods, check the sodium content on the Nutrition Facts label. Use the percent Daily Value (% DV) to help limit your sodium intake—5% DV or less is low and 20% DV or more is high. You don't want to exceed a total of 100% DV for sodium from all foods in a day. For some people (refer to specific populations section), you don't want to exceed about 65% DV.
- Compare sodium content for similar foods. This can really make a difference. The table on the next page shows you examples of how you can reduce the amount of sodium you eat by choosing another brand of the same food. Use the Nutrition Facts label to select brands that are lower in sodium.
- Use the claims on the front of the food package to quickly identify foods that contain less salt or that are a good source of potassium, a nutrient you want to get more of in your daily diet. Examples include "low in sodium," "very low sodium," and "high in potassium."
- When you're preparing food at home, use herbs and spices to add flavor to your foods, so you don't depend too heavily on salt. Don't salt foods before or during cooking and limit use at the table.
- When you're eating out, ask that your meal be prepared without salt, or ask the server to identify menu items made without salt.

If you follow these tips for awhile, your taste for salt will decrease—*you won't miss it.*

When buying packaged food, use the Nutrition Facts label to check potassium content. Use the % DV to look for foods that are low in sodium and high in potassium—which counteracts some of sodium's effects on blood pressure. NOTE: Potassium is not always found on the label.

Considerations for specific population groups:

Some people should get no more than 1,500 milligrams of sodium each day, and should meet the potassium recommendation through foods. These are:

- People with high blood pressure
- African-Americans/blacks
- People who are middle-aged or older

Get enough potassium each day.

Potassium-containing food sources include leafy greens, such as spinach and collards; fruit from vines, such as grapes and blackberries; root vegetables, such as carrots and potatoes; and citrus fruits, such as oranges and grapefruit. More specific examples are listed on the Food Sources of Potassium table on the next page. Adults should aim to consume 4,700 milligrams of potassium from food and beverages each day.

Ranges of sodium content for selected foods available in the retail market

This table is provided to show the importance of reading the food label to determine the sodium content of food, which can vary by several hundreds of milligrams in similar foods.

Food	Amount	Range of Sodium Content (mg)	% Daily Value (% DV)* for Sodium
Breads, all types	1 oz	95 - 210	4% - 9%
Frozen pizza, plain cheese	4 oz	450 - 1,200	19% - 50%
Frozen vegetables, all types	1/2 c	2 - 160	0% - 7%
Salad dressing, regular fat, all types	2 Tbsp	110 - 505	5% - 21%
Salsa	2 Tbsp	150 - 240	6% - 10%
Soup (tomato), reconstituted	8 oz	700 - 1,260	29% - 53%
Tomato juice	8 oz (~1 c)	340 - 1,040	14% - 43%
Potato chips[a]	1 oz (28.4 g)	120 - 180	5% - 8%
Tortilla chips[a]	1 oz (28.4 g)	105 - 160	4% - 7%
Pretzels[a]	1 oz (28.4 g)	290 - 560	12% - 23%

* % Daily Values (DV) listed in this column are based on the food amounts listed in the table. The DV for sodium is 2,400 mg.

[a] All snack foods are regular flavor, salted.

Source: Agriculture Research Service (ARS) Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 17 and recent manufacturers' label data from retail market surveys. Serving sizes were standardized to be comparable among brands within a food. Pizza and bread slices vary in size and weight across brands.

Note: None of the examples provided were labeled low-sodium products.

Food Sources of Potassium

Food, Amount	Potassium (mg)	% Daily Value*	Calories
Sweet potato, baked 1 potato (146 g)	694	20%	131
Beet greens, cooked, 1/2 c	655	19%	19
Potato, baked, flesh, 1 potato (156 g)	610	17%	145
White beans, canned, 1/2 c	595	17%	153
Yogurt, plain, non-fat, 8-oz container	579	17%	127
Clams, canned, 3 oz	534	15%	126
Yogurt, plain, low-fat, 8-oz container	531	15%	143
Prune juice, 3/4 c	530	15%	136
Carrot juice, 3/4 c	517	14%	71
Halibut, cooked, 3 oz	490	14%	119
Soybeans, green, cooked, 1/2 c	485	14%	127
Tuna, yellowfin, cooked, 3 oz	484	14%	118
Lima beans, cooked, 1/2 c	484	14%	104
Winter squash, cooked, 1/2 c	448	13%	40
Soybeans, mature, cooked, 1/2 c	443	13%	149
Rockfish, Pacific, cooked, 3 oz	442	13%	103
Cod, Pacific, cooked, 3 oz	439	13%	89
Banana, 1 medium	422	12%	105
Spinach, cooked, 1/2 c	419	12%	21
Tomato juice, 3/4 c	417	12%	31
Tomato sauce, 1/2 c	405	12%	39

Source: Nutrient values from Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 17. Foods are from ARS single nutrient reports, sorted in descending order by nutrient content in terms of common household measures. Food items and weights in the single nutrient reports are adapted from those in 2002 revision of USDA Home and Garden Bulletin No. 72, Nutritive Value of Foods. Mixed dishes and multiple preparations of the same food item have been omitted from this table.

* % Daily Values (DV) listed in this column are based on the food amounts listed in the table and FDA's Daily Value for potassium (3,500 mg).