

Whilst we all need a small amount of salt for good health, it really is only a very tiny amount—about 1g or a pinch a day! Too much salt can lead to a variety of health problems, so it's worth knowing a bit more about where it is most commonly found in higher amounts and how to reduce it in your diet, so read on for more information and tips.

With very best wishes,
Hannah and the Project Food team



PROJECT FOOD

A helping hand to healthy eating

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Focus on... Reducing your salt intake

Salt is a particular issue for those people with, or at risk of developing, heart conditions and high blood pressure as eating too much can raise your blood pressure, which in turn leads to an increased risk of developing coronary heart disease and having a stroke. It is also linked to a greater risk of developing kidney disease and kidney stones, and also stomach cancer and osteoporosis.

Adults should eat less than 6g of salt/day which is about 1 teaspoon (about 2.4g of sodium). Most adults are currently consuming 8g of salt per day.

Most of the salt we eat is contained within the food we buy. Foods like packet sauces, ready meals, takeaways, processed foods and stock cubes can contain a lot of salt, but salt is also added to foods like bread, breakfast cereals, cake and biscuits.

Six Surprisingly Salty Foods (continues overleaf)

Cheese, butter and salty spreads

Cheese is probably a food that most of us know can be very salty. However, by switching the type of cheese you eat you could reduce your salt intake. Hard cheese like cheddar is typically quite salty, so try and eat this less often for a lower salt intake. Soft cheeses like ricotta, cottage cheese and quark are much less salty.



Salted butter might be tasty on your toast, but it really is better to stick to the unsalted version to reduce your salt intake.

Margarines frequently contain added salt too, so make sure you check the label before you buy. Things like yeast extracts and peanut butter also contain high levels of salt, so use sparingly or look for ones with no added salt.

Sauces

Use sauces like ketchup, brown sauce and soy sauce sparingly—they can all have high levels of salt. Or look for reduced salt versions.



Salty flavourings

Things like olives, capers and anchovies add flavour, but are also likely to contain lots of salt. Try to limit their use and use herbs, spices and lemon for flavour instead.

Bread

Plain bread dough itself can be salty, but other ingredients are frequently added—e.g. cheese, sea salt and olives—all of which go to making the salt levels even higher. And it's not just bread, but bread products, such as crumpets. One Warburtons giant crumpet contains 1.55g of salt— more than 3 bags of crisps!



Potatoes

Jacket potatoes are sometimes rubbed with salt before baking, and it is rare that you get a portion of chips without them having been sprinkled with salt first.

Sweet treats

Especially with the current trend for salted caramel type products, make sure you look at food labels to try and choose things which are lower in salt—biscuits and cakes frequently have added salt in them. And you might be surprised to hear that hot chocolate can be very salty too; Galaxy Ultimate Marshmallow Hot Chocolate contains 2.4g of salt per 100g, an astonishing 16 times more salt than the 2017 national target of 0.15g per 100g for dried beverages.



Tips for reducing your salt intake

- Making more of your own food instead of buying ready-made is a great way to start—see this month's roast veg tart recipe.
- Check nutritional information on food labels and try to pick low-salt options and ingredients.
- Gradually reduce the salt you add to your food (both in cooking and at the table). As you get used to it, try to cut it out completely.
- Use lemon, pepper, herbs and spices to add flavour instead.
- Use salty foods such as bacon, ham and cheese in moderation. Using a smaller amount of a tasty variety will mean you consume less salt. And be careful when buying bread: a large proportion of people's salt in their diet comes from bread—look for low salt options or how about trying to make your own?

Each serving (150g) contains

Energy 1046kJ 250kcal	Fat 3.0g LOW	Saturates 1.3g LOW	Sugars 34g HIGH	Salt 0.9g MED
13%	4%	7%	38%	15%

of an adult's reference intake
Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/167kcal