“Helpful Hints” from PH Resource Network

Many PAH patients are advised by their doctors to go on a low-sodium diet. Adopting a diet low in sodium doesn’t have to be complicated, nor does it have to be bland. Read on for answers to all of your questions about reducing sodium intake without sacrificing flavor!

Why Low Sodium? Sodium helps regulate the balance of fluids in your body. An increase in fluid retention worsens hypertension and when water builds up in your tissues, one of the most effective ways of getting rid of this extra fluid is to reduce the amount of sodium in your diet.

How Low is “Low”? This depends on each patient and should be discussed with your doctor. It is recommended that all adults, including PAH patients, consume no more than 2400 milligrams (mg) of sodium (the equivalent of 2.4 grams or a half-teaspoon) per day. The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends a low salt diet of 2000 mg (2 grams, less than one-half teaspoon) for those who have experienced heart failure and some doctors suggest that their PAH patients follow this more conservative limit.

How Do I Cut Back on Salt?
1. Throw out your salt shaker. Do not use it in food preparation or at the table. See page 9 for ways to season your food without salt.
2. Check the serving size on processed foods when adding up your sodium intake. Purchase products with no more than 200 mg per serving.
3. Eat lots of fresh fruit and vegetables.
4. Watch out for sodium in non-food items including medications and water softeners.
5. Decode your food labels...
   » “Sodium-free” means less than five mg of sodium per serving.
   » “Very low sodium” means 35 mg or less per serving.
   » “Low sodium” means 140 mg or less per serving.
   » “Unsalted” and “no salt added” mean only that no extra salt was added; they are not necessarily low sodium foods.
   » “Healthy” means less than 360 mg of sodium per serving.

Which Foods Should I Avoid?
- Pickled foods
- Breaded or battered foods
- Salted condiments
- Seasonings containing salt
- Buttermilk
- Salted snack foods
- Pizza
- Packaged sauces (e.g., pasta sauce, curry)
- Prepared meat products (e.g., hotdogs, country ham)
- Packaged or canned soups
- Pre-seasoned frozen vegetables

What Are Some of the Secret Sources of Sodium?
- Prepared meat products (e.g., hotdogs, country ham)
- Laxatives
- Chewable antacid tablets
- Aspirin
- Celery and parsley flakes
- Cheese and milk
- Mouthwashes and toothpastes
- Some prescription drugs (ask your pharmacist)

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(Adapted from the Vanderbilt PH Clinic’s Patient and Family Guide.)
What are Flavorful Alternatives to Salt?

Use this chart to find alternative seasonings for some common foods. Try using just one of the suggested seasonings, or combine them together. Unless you’re a professional chef, you might want to stick to three or fewer per dish. Whenever possible use fresh herbs rather than the dried version.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Non-Salt Seasonings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beef</td>
<td>Bay leaf, dry mustard, sage, dill, green pepper, mushrooms, tomatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pork</td>
<td>Sage, caraway, nutmeg, apples, cranberry sauce, tarragon, dry mustard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>Sage, tarragon, fresh mushrooms, peach, apricot, pineapple, lemon, hot pepper sauce, bay leaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish, Eggs</td>
<td>Dill, basil, tarragon, curry, dry mustard, paprika, cayenne, thyme, green pepper, fresh mushrooms, tomatoes, hot pepper sauce, chives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrots</td>
<td>Lemon, orange, nutmeg, mint, basil, marjoram, oregano, thyme, brown sugar, ginger, cinnamon, mace, anise, dry mustard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broccoli</td>
<td>Lemon, oregano, rosemary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>Lemon, oregano, rosemary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>Mace, chives, rosemary, dill</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Instead of ...  
Choose ...

- Table salt, Worcestershire sauce, tartar sauce, ketchup, chili sauce, cooking wines, onion salt, meat tenderizer, steak or barbecue sauce, seasoned salt
  - Fresh and dried herbs, lemon juice, low-sodium mustard, vinegar, Tabasco sauce, low-sodium ketchup, seasoning blends that do not contain salt.

- Salted crackers and snack foods, regular peanut butter
  - Unsalted or very low-sodium crackers, snacks and peanut butter, fruits and vegetables as snacks.

- Canned tuna or salmon, cold cuts, or hot-dogs
  - Fresh or frozen meat seasoned with non-salt alternatives, low-sodium canned tuna and salmon, eggs.

- Canned vegetables, beans, or soups, tomato sauce, tomato paste
  - Fresh vegetables, low-sodium canned vegetables, soup, tomato paste and sauce, homemade tomato sauce, dried beans.

- Buttermilk, processed cheese slices and spreads, regular cheese, cottage cheese
  - Milk, cream, sour cream, non-dairy creamer, yogurt, low-sodium cottage cheese, low-sodium cheese.