

## Using Salt

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Don't be afraid to cook with salt – it'll make your meals more delicious, so that you'll want to eat more of your own healthy dishes.

Salt softens the bitterness of vegetables, so that they taste better

Salt softens the cell walls of plants, so that they're easier for us to digest

Mixing sea salt with kelp (seaweed) incorporates minerals into your diet, and reduces your sodium intake since it tastes salty.

Use salt seasonings (soy sauce, tamari, miso, ume plum vinegar) for a softer saltiness

Standard recommendations: 1-3g per day.

The average American diet contains about 3-6g of sodium per day. This comes, on average, 30% from naturally occurring salt in food, 40% from processed foods, and 30% from adding salt in cooking or at the table.

That means someone eating 6g of sodium per day can cut back to 3.6g just by eliminating processed foods from diet plans.

Although a common recommendation for people with high blood pressure is to reduce salt intake, that alone hasn't been shown to have a significant impact on blood pressure control. Increasing the potassium side of the ratio is the other key to this equation, and has been shown to have more of an impact than reducing sodium.

The average intake for a typical American is 2:1, meaning they eat twice as much sodium as potassium. The ideal ratio is 1:5, so decreasing salt (sodium chloride) doesn't take it far enough. You need to eat more plant foods to boost the potassium side of the scale.

The best sources of potassium are plant foods—particularly vegetables and fruit. That's likely why vegetarians generally have a lower incidence of high blood pressure. So if cooking with a pinch of salt means you'll eat more carrots, that's a win.

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