Hold the Salt Please!

Eating Out the Heart Healthy Way

We all like to eat out sometimes. Whether it’s fast food with the kids, a power lunch for a busy executive or a romantic dinner for two, eating out can be great fun and a welcome break from the kitchen and same old daily routine. But it’s not always the best thing for our health.

Many restaurant meals are overloaded with salt, which increases the risk of high blood pressure, heart attack and stroke. It’s serious stuff!

Two Days Worth of Sodium in a Single Meal

Health Canada recommends that persons ages 14 and over get no more than 2300 milligrams (mg) of sodium per day. Eating more poses a risk of health problems.

That’s not good news if you eat out a lot, because a recent study showed that almost half of the meals at 10 popular chain restaurants contained more than two days worth of sodium in a single meal. And 85% of their meals exceeded the recommended daily limit for sodium. Yikes!

It’s All About Better Choices!

Not to worry, you don’t have to stop eating out, though we do recommend eating out in moderation. It is a good idea to make better choices when you’re eating out; choices that can help you reduce your sodium intake. Here are some tips to help you:

Ask them to make it your way

- Choose restaurants that offer a wide variety of foods to choose from and those that are willing to prepare foods on special request.
- Ask your server about what ingredients are in the menu items.
- Ask to have foods prepared with less salt, soy sauce, teriyaki sauce, garlic salt, black bean sauce, monosodium glutamate (MSG) or other prepared sauces.
- Suggest alternate flavors such as fresh garlic, pepper, lemon, or fruit juice.
Appetizers and salads

- Use lemon juice to flavour salad and shrimp.
- Ask for sauces or dressings on the side and only use small amounts.

Entrees

- Order plain meat, poultry, fish and shellfish that is broiled, baked, roasted, poached or grilled.
- Ask for pepper, garlic or other herbs to add flavour.

Side dishes

- Enjoy plain vegetables, potatoes and rice that have been steamed or baked.
- Ask for sauces on the side and use only small amounts.
- Enjoy plain breads or rolls instead of garlic or cheese toast or salted breadsticks.

Sandwiches or burgers

- Choose fillings of vegetables, roasted meat or poultry, fish, egg or hard cheese.
- Limit cured or smoked meats, deep-fried fish or chicken, and processed cheese.
- Use only small amounts of condiments such as mustard, ketchup, pickles and sauces.

Pasta and pizza

- Order pasta or pizza with half the amount of tomato sauce.
- Ask for half the amount of cheese on pasta or pizza.
- Choose toppings such as vegetables, fruit, plain shrimp, chicken or beef.
- Limit salty toppings like ham, sausage, salami, pepperoni, bacon, anchovies, and olives.

Asian Cuisine

- Choose plain rice and noodles. Limit fried rice or noodles with sauce.
- Ask to have foods prepared with less salt, soy sauce, Teriyaki sauce, garlic salt, black bean sauce, MSG, or other prepared sauces.

Say no to sodium – for your health

Cutting back on your sodium intake is good for your health. And it’s not hard to do. Start today – use the tips from this fact sheet and look for other ways to cut the sodium in your diet.

If you want more information on reducing sodium and eating out please visit:
www.dietitians.ca
www.heartandstroke.ca
www.sodium101.ca