

IDEAS FOR WAYS TO REDUCE SALT INTAKE

The American Heart Association has proposed that sodium reduction for Americans take place in two phases. In phase 1, the goal is to lower daily intake to 2,000 mg by 2013. Then, in phase 2, the goal is to decrease intake to the desired level of 1,500 mg by 2010.

The rationale for reducing salt intake in phases is to both give manufacturers time to reformulate products and find suitable salt substitutes and to give consumers time to adjust their palates and preferences to lower salt in foods.

Here are some ideas for ways to reduce salt intake in foods prepared at home.

1. Substitute other seasonings for salt. Some of the seasonings most effective in replacing the taste of salt are:
basil -- cumin -- ginger -- black pepper -- dill seeds -- onion powder -- coriander -- garlic powder -- and curry powder
2. Add citrus zest from fresh lemons, limes, and oranges
3. Mince and add fresh herbs and hot peppers
4. Roast vegetables such as beets, carrots, squash, onions, bell peppers, eggplant, or sweet potatoes to seal in the flavor and enhance the sweetness
5. Sauté vegetables in low-sodium vegetable broth instead of steaming and adding salt
6. Use roasted garlic to enhance flavor
7. Limit the amount of cheese added into dishes. Use sharp flavored cheese such as cheddar or parmesan in small amounts to gain the flavor of cheese with less salt added

Remember:

Salt makes a person's body bigger as more water is retained to dilute the salt
Salt can increase a person's hunger and thirst and increase cravings

Information extracted from Shames, TL and Lakatos, L "Member Opinion Article: Winning the War on Salt" and Retelny, VS. "Morsels, Nibbles, & Bites". Both articles in 2011 Winter **Tastings**, newsletter of the Food and Culinary Professionals, a dietetic practice group of the American Dietetic Association.