

# Restricted Sodium Meal Plan

This meal plan is for people who are experiencing problems with high blood pressure or fluid retention and need to follow a 3 gram sodium (also known as restricted sodium) meal plan. Sodium is a mineral in salt that can cause water retention and raise blood pressure in some individuals. Most people know

sodium as “salt” and is sometimes seen on food labels as “Na,” which is its chemical symbol. The following is a list of recommended foods and those that should be avoided. This fact sheet is to provide general recommendations. One should consult with their physician and registered dietitian for specific guidance.

Type of Food	Best Choices	Foods to Avoid
Milk and Milk Products	Yogurt Low sodium cheeses like ricotta, cream cheese, and cheese which have “low sodium” on the label Limit milk to 2 cups each day	Buttermilk and Chocolate milk Regular and Processed Cheese, Cheese spreads and Cheese sauces
Breads and Cereals	Any except those under “Foods to Avoid” Unsalted or Reduced-salt crackers, air-popped popcorn Bread and rolls without salted tops Muffins All rice and pasta Most ready-to-eat and cooked cereals	Breads, crackers or rolls with salted tops Salted snack foods such as chips, pretzels, popcorn Baking mixes such as pancake mixes or biscuit mixes Pre-seasoned rice or pasta product mixes Packaged stuffing mixes Instant cooked cereal (the kind to which you just add hot water and stir)
Meat, Fish, Poultry and Alternatives	Any except those under “Foods to Avoid” Unsalted nuts, seeds and peanut butter Fresh or frozen meat, poultry, fish and shellfish Eggs and egg substitutes Dried peas and beans—if using canned, rinse under running water and drain well to reduce salt	Cured, salted, smoked, canned or pickled meat, fish or poultry i.e. luncheon meat, deli meat, ham, bacon, sausages, hot dogs, etc. Breaded meats, poultry or fish Convenience foods including “fast food” Processed cheeses Salted nuts
Fruits and Vegetables	All fresh, frozen, and canned fruit without added salt. All fruit juices All fresh, frozen, or low-sodium canned vegetables Low-sodium or salt-free vegetable juice Low-sodium canned or homemade soups	Canned vegetables with salt Frozen vegetables in sauce Instant potatoes or potato casseroles Tomato sauce or stewed tomatoes French fries Regular spaghetti sauces Pickled vegetables (such as kim chi, sauerkraut or pickles)
Fats and Oils	Any except those under “Foods to Avoid.” Low-sodium or unsalted butter, margarine, salad dressing	Bacon fat, salt pork Packaged gravies, sauces, and salad dressings Packaged chip dips Gravies or sauces made with salt or meat extracts or yeast extracts
Desserts, Sweets, Condiments, Beverages and Others	Unsalted herbs or spices or dry mustard Lemon and lime juice or most vinegar Flavoring extracts such as vanilla Cocoa Salt-free catsup, relishes or other salt-free condiments Salt free seasonings such as Mrs. Dash Tabasco and most hot sauces (check the label)	Instant pudding mixes Commercial snack pies or cakes Sea salt, salted herbs and spices like garlic salt or celery salt Meat tenderizer Olives, pickles or pickle relish Seasoned vinegar and bouillons Teriyaki and soy sauces including reduced sodium soy sauce Meat and poultry coatings and breading

## Restricted Sodium Meal Plan *continued*

### Suggestions:

- Read food labels.
- Choose foods labeled “low-sodium,” “reduced sodium” or “sodium free”
- Buy products low in sodium, MSG, baking soda and other sodium-containing compounds including most antacids.
- Avoid prepared foods such as canned, frozen, dried and fast foods.

You may also benefit from the DASH diet which focuses on an eating plan which is low in fat, high in fiber and rich in fruits and vegetables. More information can be found at:

[http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/new\\_dash.pdf](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/new_dash.pdf)

Another resource is <http://www.americanheart.org>