MyPyramid.gov
STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOU

Fact Sheet

Be Salt Savvy – Cut Back on Sodium *for Healthier School Meals*

KEY ISSUES:

- **Too much salt and sodium are linked to high blood pressure. Reducing dietary sodium can lower blood pressure, which reduces the risk of heart disease, stroke and kidney disease.**
- **The *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend that both adults and children get less than 2,300 mg of sodium (approximately one teaspoon of salt) per day. Many students eat nearly double the daily recommended amount!**
- **The typical school lunch contains more than 1,000 mg of sodium. Strive to offer school lunches with less than 800 mg of sodium.**
- **Cutting back on sodium in school meals can help students learn to enjoy foods for their natural tastes. Kicking the salt habit may provide health benefits for a lifetime.**

Nearly all Americans consume more sodium than they need. Often we don't know how much sodium we are getting. Taste alone may not tell us which foods are high in sodium. Table salt (sodium chloride) isn't the only source of sodium. Look at ingredient lists for other sources, such as monosodium glutamate (MSG), baking soda, baking powder, disodium phosphate, sodium alginate, and sodium nitrate or nitrite.

Children's taste for salt is a learned habit. By gradually reducing the salt and sodium in school meals, students' tastes can change. Offer lower sodium versions of popular menu items and recipes at the beginning of a school year. Students may hardly notice the difference. Be "salt savvy" and help students enjoy the taste of the food instead of the salt!

Easy ways to follow the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*

Recipe for Success

- **Read Nutrition Facts labels** to compare the sodium content for similar foods. Foods that are low in sodium contain less than 140 mg or 5% Daily Value (DV). Choose products with the lowest amount of sodium per serving.
- **Serve more fresh foods** and fewer processed foods. Most fresh fruits and vegetables are naturally low in sodium.
- **Talk to food vendors that offer low-sodium products.** Order lower sodium versions when purchasing popular processed foods.

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 1 slice (34g)
Servings Per Container 108

Amount Per Serving		
Calories 90	Calories from Fat 15	
		%Daily Value*
Total Fat 1.5g		**2 %**
Saturated Fat 0g		**0 %**
Trans Fat 0g		
Cholesterol 0mg		**0 %**
Sodium 140mg		**6 %**
Total Carbohydrate 16g		**5 %**
Dietary Fiber 1g		**0 %**
Sugars 2g		
Protein 2g		
Vitamin A 0%	•	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 0%	•	Iron 6%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

USDA Commodity Food Program

USDA plans to offer new low-sodium canned vegetables through the USDA Commodity Food Program in School Year 2009. Schools can also order frozen vegetables as a lower sodium option. Check the list of available foods at: www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/schcnp/.

- **Offer high-sodium foods less often.** Go easy on pre-prepared, processed entrees and side dishes, such as pizza, chicken nuggets, and hot dogs. Use grilled chicken breast instead of luncheon meat, bacon, sausage, or ham.
- **Modify recipes that use high-sodium ingredients** such as cheese sauces, canned soups, tomato sauce, paste, or spaghetti sauce, canned vegetables, chips, and taco shells. Use lower sodium versions or use less. Remove salt from recipes whenever possible. (Note: Do not leave out the salt when preparing baked goods because it could affect the baking process.)
- **Use fresh or dried herbs,** spices, lemon or orange zest, or fruit juices to jazz up the flavors in foods without adding sodium!

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Messages for Students

- Be "salt savvy"- read the Nutrition Facts label and choose foods with less sodium.
- Try fruit or veggies with low-fat dip instead of salty snack foods.

Did You Know?

Most sodium (about 75 percent) in our diet comes from eating processed and prepared foods, such as canned vegetables, soups, luncheon meats, and frozen entrees. Food manufacturers use salt or other sodium-containing compounds to preserve food as well as to modify the taste and texture.

Some condiments such as soy sauce and ketchup can be high in sodium. Adding them - either while cooking or at the table - can raise the sodium content of the meal!

Sodium that naturally occurs in meat, poultry, dairy products, and vegetables, accounts for only about 10 percent of our salt intake.

For more information:

www.mypyramid.gov

www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/CNP/FILES/SNDAIII-Vol2.pdf

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