

Published in the public interest on the web at [www.saltmatters.org](http://www.saltmatters.org)

The **business address** of the Salt Skip Program is Queensland Hypertension Association  
PO Box 193, Holland Park, QLD 4121, Fax (07) 3394 7815.

Use the **editorial address** when writing about the newsletter—see the panel on page 4.

## Reasons Why Elderly People May Be Eating Poorly

**Eating is an experience that involves all our 5 senses. The ageing process causes these senses to be reduced or altered. Some medications and treatments can also change or reduce a person's senses, in particular, taste and smell.**



Poor oral health, dentures, chewing problems and lack of saliva production can also change our taste perception.

This may explain why the elderly may report that everything tastes bland and needs more salt.

Instead of adding extra salt that can increase the risk of high blood pressure, it is recommended that elderly people try adding more herbs and aromatic spices, to improve the flavour of their meals.

### Reduced sense of sight

Our enjoyment of food is largely connected to how a dish looks.

Eye conditions such as cataracts can reduce the appeal of meals and impact an elderly person's desire to eat.

Make dishes appealing by cooking with more colourful ingredients. For example, use different coloured potatoes or capsicum.

A trick is to use a bright coloured plate for dramatic effect and to enhance the visual appeal of a meal.

### Medications

The side effects of some medications can alter an elderly person's sense of taste and appetite which can deter them from eating.



Elderly people eating poorly should always consult their doctor about the possibility of changing their medication - if this is reducing the amount of food they are eating.

## Reasons Why Elderly People May Be Eating Poorly – Cont.

### Constipation

A range of things can cause constipation including some medications, not being well hydrated and a diet low in fibre. When this happens, a feeling of fullness, discomfort, bloating and/or pain is commonly experienced. This may reduce the amount of food that a person can eat at meals and lower their appetite.

For most people, symptoms of constipation can be reduced with a diet high in fibre, increased fluids and regular exercise. If constipation is ongoing, it's important to talk with your doctor about safe ways to alleviate it.

### Swallowing and chewing difficulties

Decreased saliva production is common in the elderly causing a dry mouth. Not only does this affect how food tastes, it can also make eating feel like a chore. Ill-fitting dentures can make chewing difficult and cause pain, so these need to be checked regularly.

Some elderly people experience ongoing difficulties swallowing which is called *dysphagia*. A speech pathologist can determine how severe the swallowing difficulties are and whether a diet change is a needed to include thickened fluids and/or texture modified foods.

### Dining alone

Meals are often more enjoyed when eaten with others. It is common for us put less effort into making our meals when cooking for one. Try to eat with others, invite a friend over and take turns in cooking – but drop the salt.

Enhance your dining experience by creating a more enjoyable atmosphere. For example, use a nice plate setting, place some flowers on the table, use garnishes and or play background music.

Source: *Nutrition Australia*

## 10 Steps to Reduce Your Salt Intake in 2016

Many health-conscious people find the following steps straightforward and easy to follow:

1. Start the day with no-added-salt porridge or a low-salt cereal, with or without low-fat yoghurt (stewed fruit or rhubarb can be added to enhance flavour). Snack on fruit, dried fruit and nuts (unsalted).
2. Remove most of the processed foods from your shopping list and buy mostly fresh foods, especially fruit and vegetables.
3. Dress salads with olive oil and balsamic vinegar without adding salt or salty dressings.
4. Remove salt shakers from the table and the kitchen, including salt in all its guises—sea salt, garlic salt, onion salt, and all the expensive gourmet salts of various colours.
5. It will mean the amount of salt and sugar in packaged foods will shrink while portion sizes will also be reduced.
6. If you need supplementary iodine, using 'iodised salt' (salt that has been supplemented with iodine) is not appropriate. There are many other sources of iodine to help you meet your iodine requirements; these can be recommended by your pharmacist.
7. Cook food to conserve flavour using methods such as steaming, roasting, baking, stir-frying, microwaving or barbecuing. Boiling foods can result in loss of potassium and flavour into the boiling water; this may entice you to add salt after cooking.

**“Salt with that?” No thanks!**

## 10 Steps to Reduce Your Salt Intake in 2016 – Cont.

8. If fresh vegetables, meat, poultry, eggs and fish need more flavour, use your favourite herbs, spices and vinegars, not salt, to create the flavour you desire.



9. Read the Nutrition Information Panel on processed products and select only low-salt processed foods—that is, those with a sodium content no higher than 120 mg/100 g.



10. Buy wholemeal or whole-grain bread from small bakers or specialty bread shops that cater for discriminating customers. Some low-salt breads are also available in some supermarkets. You can also make your own bread (perhaps with added iodine) in a breadmaker.

Source: Nutrition Australia

**Salt? "Definitely Not"**

## Supermarket Shopping in the UK ~ a buyers experience

*We certainly are the lucky country when it comes to quality of food and food labelling.*

Much time was spent in UK supermarkets, during my recent Dec/Jan visit, reading food labels and converting sodium grams to milligrams – well I think that is what it was!

Surprisingly, we are better off than the Brits. We have a wider range of lower sodium products on the supermarket shelves and far superior labelling.

I had truly believed the Brits were ahead of us in reducing dietary salt. *How wrong I was.*

Very few products were lower than 120mg – even unsalted butter and milk.

And where was the best place to shop? Morrisons were at the top of the list but I did source Irish butter at Marks and Spencers. I spent a lot of time at Tescos but on the whole I ate "hunt and gather" style and stuck to meat, vegetables and fruit.

How did I survive the trip? Well, I did a lot of "looking on" at others eating and walked miles and kilometers at each end to reduce the jetlag. *Perseverance works and exercise works.*

Fran Williams – EO, QHA



At Salt Skip News, we are always interested to hear from readers. Please send us your Salt Skip news, tips and salt-free or low sodium recipes...

**SALT SKIP NEWS**  
**No 197**

February 2016

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Salt Skip Program  
editorial address:  
Malcolm Riley  
5 Malcolm St, Flinders  
Park SA 5025

Email:  
Malcolm.Riley@csiro.au

**Salt Skip News** will  
continue to be distributed  
in hard copy in The BP  
Monitor (QHA Newsletter)

**BP Monitor with Salt  
Skip News** is published  
every 2 months, from  
February to December (6  
issues a year) and printed  
by Snap Printing, Felix  
Street, Brisbane.



print design websites

## Tomato, Ginger and Chilli Chutney



### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 Spanish red onion, finely diced
- 50 g finely grated ginger
- 2 long red chillies, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons brown mustard seeds
- 2.8kg ripe tomatoes
- 250ml tomato passata
- 80ml apple cider vinegar
- 55 g caster sugar

### Method

- Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium - high heat, add onion, ginger, chilli and garlic. Cook, stirring occasionally for 4 – 5 minutes until tender, translucent and fragrant. Stir in mustard seeds and cook for 30 – 40 seconds until the seeds begin to pop.
- Stir in the chopped tomatoes and passata and bring to a simmer, reduce heat to medium and simmer, stirring occasionally for 10 = 15 minutes until tomatoes break down. Season with fresh ground pepper and stir in the vinegar and sugar. Simmer for 10 – 15 minutes until thick and rich.
- Pulse with a hand-held blender or in a food processor to a sauce consistency. Transfer to sterilised glass jars or bottles, seal and cool to room temperature. Chutney will keep for up to 2 months in the fridge.

At Salt Skip News, we are always interested to hear from readers. Please send us your Salt Skip news, tips and salt-free or low sodium recipes...

**BP Monitor with Salt Skip News** is published every 2 months, from February to December (6 issues a year).  
**Salt Skip Editorial Committee:** Prof Michael Stowasser (Director, Hypertension Unit, University of Qld School of Medicine, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Brisbane), RN Cynthia Kogovsek (Hypertension Nurse, Hypertension Unit, Greenslopes Private Hospital, Brisbane), Prof Caryl Nowson (Nutrition & Ageing, Deakin University, Melbourne), Jane Brown (Home Economist, Salt Skip Program, Hobart), and Dr Jennifer Keogh (Dietitian, Australian Institute of Weight Control, Adelaide). Text drafted (edited where other authors are named) by Dr Malcolm Riley, Nutrition Epidemiologist, CSIRO. Printed by Snap Printing, Felix Street, Brisbane.