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High sodium diet may predict high blood pressure to come

As dietary sodium levels go up over time, so does the risk for high blood pressure, suggests a new study that followed more than 4,000 adults in Japan for four years.

The study did not measure dietary sodium directly, instead using urine samples to estimate levels of sodium consumed, but the results align with other large studies of sodium intake and blood pressure risk, researchers say.

“A small amount of salt (less than 3,000 milligrams a day) is necessary for us, but excessive salt is dangerous,” said co-author Dr Tomonori Sugiura of Nagoya City University Graduate School of Medical Sciences in Japan.

To excrete excess amounts of sodium, the body has to increase blood pressure, Sugiura said.

Dietary sodium levels are much higher in Japan than in the U.S., but most people eat too much in both countries, Sugiura added.

U.S. government dietary guidelines recommend consuming no more than 2,300 mg of sodium a day, equivalent to about two-thirds of a teaspoon of salt, and that people with existing high blood pressure or risk factors for it limit total sodium to 1500 mg daily. Past research indicates the average American consumes about 3,600 mg of sodium a day.

Scientists are still debating whether high levels of sodium intake among people with normal blood pressure could cause chronic high blood pressure or other cardiovascular problems to develop.

But if it does contribute, sodium intake would be a risk factor that would be easy to modify to benefit public health, the authors write in the *Journal of the American Heart Association* (AHA).

The researchers used urine tests from checkup appointments to estimate the dietary salt intake of 4,523 Japanese adults without high blood pressure. The participants, who ranged in age from 22 to 85 years old, had annual physicals including sodium tests and blood pressure measurements.

The study team used these records to follow people for three or more years to see if they developed high blood pressure. During the study, 1,027 individuals developed high blood pressure, including 26 percent of the men and almost 17 percent of the women.

Having higher sodium levels at the beginning of the study and showing greater increases in sodium levels each year were both tied to higher risk of developing high blood pressure, the researchers found.

At the start of the study, the participants were consuming an average of 4,200 milligrams of dietary sodium per day.

Salt? “No thank you”

High Sodium diet may predict high blood pressure to come (cont.)

Those who would go on to have high blood pressure were eating an average of 4,500 milligrams per day.

Men tended to have higher urinary sodium levels than women. And people who developed high blood pressure also tended to be heavier and older.

“Salt is one of the most important factors in the prediction of hypertension,” Sugiura said. “Other important lifestyle factors include obesity and too much alcohol intake.”

People with diabetes, obesity, a history of cardiovascular disease, and those with systolic blood pressure greater than 130 millimeters of Mercury (mmHg) or diastolic blood pressure greater than 85mmHg should pay the most attention to their sodium intake, Sugiura said.

Trials that actually test changes in diet, as opposed to observing a population as this study did, have shown that modest reductions in sodium intake will decrease the instance of high blood pressure, according to Dr. Paul K. Whelton of Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine in New Orleans.



“For people with established (high blood pressure), reducing sodium intake reduces the need for hypertension therapy,” Whelton, who was not part of the new study, said.

Exact sodium guidelines vary by country and advisory source, but in a way they are irrelevant because “no one is even close to it,” he said. More than 90 percent of U.S. adults exceed recommendations, he said.

While individuals can try to limit their sodium intake on a daily basis, the vast majority of sodium in our diets comes from processed food, so gradually reducing the amounts in those foods would have important health benefits without asking people to actually change their behavior, Whelton said.

“Adding sodium at the table not very important, about 80 percent of what we get is added during processing,” he said.

So far, manufacturers have not been pressured to reduce sodium levels, due to powerful commercial lobbies, he said. Salty processed foods make consumers thirsty, and many of the same manufacturers also make soft drinks, he noted.

Whelton has found in his own studies that “the more you can reduce your sodium intake the better off you were, even those with a small reduction.” **Source: Journal of the American Heart Association**

Australia beating UK in baby food battle

Aussie children are getting a better start than their UK cousins, with Australian first research finding that the majority of baby and toddler foods sold at our supermarkets are of a high nutritional quality.

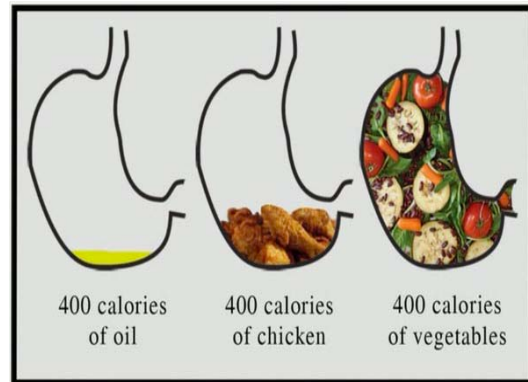
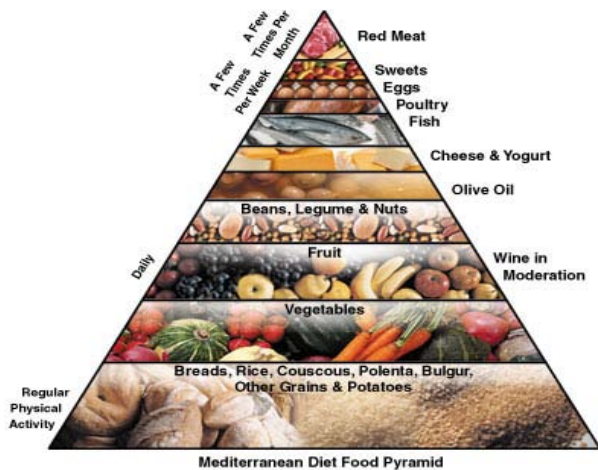
Senior author Professor Victoria Flood from the University of Sydney said the study, which examined 309 products from 17 manufacturers, showed results that appeared better than some other countries.

“The nutritional quality of baby and toddler foods has been largely overlooked in health research, but it is an increasingly important market to consider,” Prof Flood said.

“Our youngest children need the best possible start when they are naturally moved onto solid foods and begin to develop their habits and tastes. “Only two other regions, the United Kingdom and Canada, have published research on the healthiness of their baby and toddler foods, with both countries showing higher levels of sodium and sugar overall than we have in similar products in Australia, so we are doing well.” **Source: George Institute for Global Health**

QHA BP Monitor article Page 4 (cont.) courtesy of Salt Skip News: "Dietary approach in the prevention of Cardiovascular Disease: Where are we at? Trends and evidence to follow in 2015"

Primary Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease With a Mediterranean Diet



2. Keep your weight down



The Traditional Mediterranean Diet (TMD)

- Described initially by Ancel Keys in the 1950's, focused on the amount of saturated fat consumed
- A study of 7 countries found: association between dietary intake of saturated fat in different countries, their dietary patterns and heart attacks
- But benefit may be from the synergy of food and food constituents: 10000 compounds identified in fruit and vegetables alone, used in the TMD (Pezzuto et al. 2010)
- Declared world cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2010

Adherence to the Mediterranean Diet (MD) is associated with an increase in serum markers of atheroma plaque stability, which may explain, at least in part, the protective role of MD against ischemic heart disease.

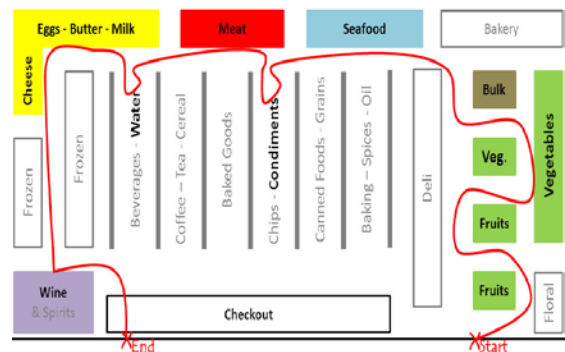
Concluding Tips

1. Nutrient-Density Versus Energy-Density

High energy density nutrient-poor foods versus high nutrient density foods.

- Choose whole, nutritious foods.

3. Shop in the outside aisles



4. Eat a rainbow every day



5. And if you must... Only a very small serve!



Thank you Dr Veronique Charchay for her presentation on the latest trends and evidence in the prevention of CVD.

Roasted Capsicum Pesto

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Packed full of calcium, magnesium and protein, this recipe makes 1 cup, serves 4 and can be served as a starter. Store in the refrigerator.

Ingredients

- 2 red capsicums, halved, seeded
- ¼ cup blanched almonds, toasted
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil leaves
- 1 clove of garlic, chopped
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

Directions

Preheat grill on high. Cook capsicums, cut-side down, under the grill for 5 – 7 minutes or until charred and blistered. Transfer to a bowl. Cover and set aside for 10 minutes. Peel and coarsely chop.

Process capsicum, almonds, basil leaves and garlic until finely chopped. Add lemon juice and olive oil.

Serve with toasted Matso Bread (Jewish flat bread found in some supermarkets and delicatessens) or vegetable crudités.

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...

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