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New York City to require high-salt label at chain restaurants in U.S. first

The New York Board of Health has voted unanimously to require menu items with more than 2,300mg of sodium to show a salt shaker symbol as restaurant owners raise concerns.

Salty fare from sandwiches to salads will soon come with a first-of-its-kind warning label at chain restaurants in New York City.

The City Board of Health recently voted unanimously to require chain eateries to put salt-shaker symbols on menus to denote dishes with more than the recommended daily limit of 2,300mg of sodium. That's about a teaspoon.

New York is the first US city with such a requirement, which comes as officials and experts urge Americans to eat healthier. It furthers a series of novel nutritional efforts in the nation's biggest city.

City officials say they're just saying "know", not "no", about foods high in a substance that experts say is too prevalent in most Americans' diets, raising the risk of high blood pressure and potentially heart attacks and strokes. Public health advocates applaud the proposal, but salt producers and restaurateurs call it a misguided step toward an onslaught of confusing warnings.

The average American consumes about 3,400mg of salt each day. Only about one in 10 Americans meets the 1 teaspoon US guideline.

The vast majority of dietary salt comes from processed and restaurant food, studies show. Consumers may not realise how much sodium is in, say, a turkey Panini (2,590mg), chicken strips (2,700mg) or a Subway foot-long spicy Italian sub (2,980mg).

"There are few other areas in which public health could do more to save lives," Michael Jacobson, Executive Director for the Centre for Science in the Public Interest, an advocacy group, said at a City Health Department hearing in July this year. Some health experts have urged the city to set the warning limit as low as 500mg.

The Salt Institute, a trade association for salt producers, has said it opposes the proposal as it is based on "incorrect government targets" called into question by recent research. Last year, an international study involving 100,000 people suggested that most people's salt consumption was actually OK for heart health, adding that both way too much and too little salt can do harm. Other scientists fault the study and say most people still consume way too much salt in the U.S.

Restaurant owners say healthy-eating initiatives should focus on diet as a whole, not on ingredients or foods. They want the city to leave salt warnings to federal authorities.

New York City to require high-salt label at chain restaurants in national first (cont.)

The US Food and Drug Administration are working on new sodium guidelines.

“The concern, at some point, is that warning labels and the confluence of warnings on menus will lead to a collective shrug by consumers ... as every item on a menu will be flagged as inappropriate in one way or another,” James Versocki, a Lawyer for the New York State Restaurant Association’s New York City chapter, said at the hearing in July.

Still, at least one eatery chain – Panera Bread – has expressed support for the city’s proposal. It will take effect 1 December, 2015.



In recent years, New York City has pioneered banning trans fats from restaurant meals and forcing chain eateries to post calorie counts on menus. It led development of voluntary salt-reduction targets for various table staples and tried, unsuccessfully, to limit the size of some sugary drinks. Restaurant representatives criticising the salt proposal have noted that courts struck down the previous “big-soda” ban as overreaching by the Health Board.

Source: *The Guardian* US.

Commentary: Australian adults are recommended to consume less than 4g salt (equivalent to 1,600mg sodium) with 6g salt (equivalent to 2,300mg of sodium) the maximum daily upper limit. This upper limit is equivalent to about a teaspoon of salt.

Source: <http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/salt-facts>

What we need to pay attention to when we read food labels in Australia

Even if you have never heard of a “health halo” or have no idea what health washing is, you will definitely have encountered them. In fact - you probably come across examples of these almost every time you buy food.

These terms describe the extremely common marketing practice of “spinning food” so it appears to be healthier than it really is. It’s how food manufacturers convince us to buy their sugar-laden, salt-packed or fat-filled food products when we really want to buy healthier foods.

Think multi-grain crackers (often extremely high in salt), low-fat yoghurt (likely loaded with sugar), sugar-free soft drinks (usually packed with colours and flavours you don’t need) and chips that are free of saturated fat (but still loaded with salt).

Most of our leading food manufacturers are involved in this “spinning food” practice and market many of their products to give them a “healthy halo”.

Food manufacturers know many of us are tempted by terms such as organic, gluten-free or low-fat. The thing is, foods that carry these labels often have extra ingredients we don’t want or have very little nutritional value.

Terms such as: “no artificial flavours or colours”, usually refer to a single ingredient and don’t provide an accurate picture of a food’s overall nutritional value. (Yes, this include the lollies that have “no artificial flavours or colours” may yet are packed with sugar).

A food may not have any artificial flavours or colours, but it may still have preservatives and other additives and/or be high in sugar or salt or saturated fat.

Read the full article at: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-08-11/navigating-the-hype-of-health-food-halos/6688648>

Source: *ABC Health and Wellbeing*

QHA BP Monitor article Page 4 (cont.) courtesy of Salt Skip News: "Hidden Paths of the Taste System: Flirting with Obesity, Asthma and Hypertension" (cont.)

Bitter Taste Receptors in Airways

The T2R38 molecule is an upper airway sentinel to respiratory infection. The molecule has a role in controlling bacteria in the bronchia and activates the immune system. PAV PAV (hyper tasters) are much faster at getting rid of bacteria.

In a study of laboratory mice, bitter tastants induced relaxation of intact mouse tracheas, in a non-cAMP-dependent manner.

Cardiovascular System: The Meaning of Bitter Taste

The same bitter compound, the bitter taste receptor, is also found in the aorta.

In the laboratory mice, sodium thiocyanate exerted concentration-dependent and G-protein-dependent effects on their cardiovascular systems.

The salt taste receptor is a different molecule with different genes. But there is a link between taste perception and hypertensive patients and volunteers are needed for a current study at the University of Queensland. See article on the right, **Volunteers Needed**.

In Summary – Everybody Tastes Food Differently and This Has Implications

We need to understand what is different between us.

- Is there a path to weight gain?
- Is it a hidden pathway?



Thank you Dr Eugeni Roura for his presentation "Hidden Paths of the Taste System". Much appreciated!

Volunteers Urgently Needed Hypertensive and Normotensive Panellists Invited for Sensory Trial

Volunteers aged 40-60, who do not smoke, are wanted for a study related to salty taste and salt taste sensitivity. We are running these studies to improve human health by reducing the dietary sodium content in the diet, thereby maintaining a good taste of food. Each participant will receive a gift voucher. For details please contact Dr. Anja Winkelbach (a.winkelbach @uq.edu.au)

Introduction and purpose of the present study:

Thank you for considering participating in this study. The aim of the study is to evaluate differences in salty taste thresholds for normotensive and hypertensive panellists in different foods. Aside from common salt, (NaCl), monosodium glutamate (MSG) will be tested. MSG has a salty taste and may be considered to be a suitable substitute for common salt, used at home frequently. Salt reduction is an important topic in Australia's health agenda and of special interest for people that suffer cardio vascular diseases for example. Therefore, the study aims to determine differences in the perception threshold for MSG and NaCl for both, normotensive and hypertensive people to work on future guidelines on how to reduce salt in the daily diet without losing pleasantness.

What will be required if you decide to participate?

Participation is relatively straightforward and completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you will be participant in a taste panel of 64 people. You will be asked to come to the sensory laboratory for a series of 4 laboratory sessions that should run not longer than 1 h each. The experiments will be controlled sensory evaluations conducted in a food sensory laboratory (83-N404) at the University of Queensland, St. Lucia.

Prior to the tasting session, your blood pressure will be measured. We will collect saliva and oral mouth cells with swabs. You will be asked to fill out a short questionnaire and after tasting, your blood pressure will be measured again (2x). Your involvement in the study would be completely voluntary and in appreciation you will receive a \$55 voucher at the end of the final trial. **Contact Dr Anja Winkelbach at E: a.winkelbach @uq.edu.au**

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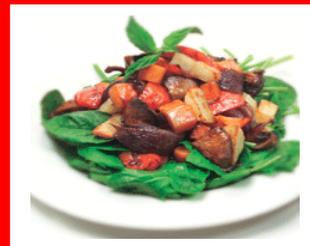
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Warm Roast Vegetable Salad



Ingredients

- 300 g Butternut pumpkin, peeled and chopped
- 2 potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 1 onion, chopped into eighths
- 1 capsicum, seeded and cut into large pieces
- 100 g flat mushrooms, quartered
- 1 bunch English spinach leaves, washed
- Olive oil or Canola oil spray

Dressing

- 1 tablespoon Balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon Olive oil
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon fresh basil, chopped

Method

- Preheat oven to 220C
- Line a large baking tray with baking paper
- Place pumpkin and potatoes in a microwave dish with a little water, cover and cook on high for 4 minutes
- Toss pumpkin, potatoes, capsicum, onion and mushrooms together and spread in a single layer over tray
- Lightly spray with oil and bake for 30-40 minutes, turning after 15 minutes
- Mix dressing ingredients in a small bowl. When vegetables are cooked, pour over dressing.
- Line a serving dish with the spinach leaves and pile roast vegetables on top.
- Serve immediately. Serves 4.

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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