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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.

Update: New York Restaurant Industry Group Take On City's Board of Health

Further to our report on the landmark stance in the US to reduce the amount of salt in restaurant meals – here is the latest update from the US.

New York Restaurant industry trade group is now suing City's Board of Health to stop it from enforcing the new rule requiring many chain restaurants to post warnings on menu items that are high in sodium.

Early in December, The National Restaurant Association said the New York Board of Health unfairly burdened restaurant owners and usurped the power of the popularly elected City Council by forcing restaurants with more than 15 locations nationwide to warn diners about salty foods.

Backed by New York City Mayor, Bill de Blasio, the rule, believed the first of its kind in the US, requires restaurants to post a salt shaker encased in a black triangle as a warning symbol next to any menu item with more than 2,300 milligrams (0.08 ounce) of sodium, the daily limit many US nutritionists recommend.

New York City adopted the rule, which took effect on December 1, in an effort to help lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart attacks and strokes.

The rule also applies to concession stands at some movie theaters and sports stadiums. Violators would be punished by a \$200 fine, starting on March 1, 2016.



In papers being filed with the state Supreme Court in Manhattan, the restaurant group likened the rule to former Mayor Michael Bloomberg's failed effort to curb sales of sugary drinks larger than 16 ounces (473 milliliters).

"The regulation, like the Soda Ban before it, is completely arbitrary in its scope, reach, and application," the group said. "With the Sodium Mandate, the Board has required the disclosure of just enough inaccurate and controversial information about sodium in certain food items to cause far reaching negative consequences rather than help consumers and reduce public health risks."

Reference: National Restaurant Association v. New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene et al, New York State Supreme Court, New York County.

Happy Christmas to Readers



Healthy Food Partnership

The Healthy Food Partnership will provide a mechanism for collective, voluntary action between government, the public health sector and the food industry to encourage healthier eating.

The Healthy Food Partnership, a Health Department initiative, met for the first time on 13 November 2015. The partnership will focus on making achievements in the following areas:

- continuing to support industry to reformulate their foods supported by the Health Star Rating system;
- supporting consumers to eat appropriate levels of core foods such as fruit, vegetables, whole grains, meat, fish and dairy, and appropriate levels of energy intake;
- educating consumers on appropriate portion and serve sizes, and
- improving consumers' knowledge and awareness of healthier food choices, including through developing and publicising tools and resources to consumers and health professionals.

The partnership is chaired by the Minister for Rural Health, Senator the Hon Fiona Nash and includes representatives from the Australian Food and Grocery Council, Ausveg, Coles, Dairy Australia, Dietitians Association of Australia, Food Standards Australia New Zealand, Meat and Livestock Australia, Metcash, National Heart Foundation of Australia, Public Health Association of Australia, the Quick Service Restaurant Forum and Woolworths.

Source: www.health.gov.au

Commentary:

Any reduction in sodium levels in supermarket foods is a giant step forward for Australians. Anyone restricting their sodium intake will know how very hard it is to find products with low salt options from any of the 'middle isles' of the supermarket – and the few products available aren't kept in permanent stock by supermarkets – Editor.

Secret Salt, Sugar Cut Is Wishful Shrinking

The Supermarkets and food companies are joining forces to make us healthier in a campaign dubbed “Health By Stealth”.

It will mean the amount of salt and sugar in packaged foods will shrink while portion sizes will also be reduced.



Manufacturers will change their products in an effort to cut the nation's expanding waistlines and the number of heart attacks and strokes.

Australians are still eating on average 9g of salt every day, much more than the maximum 6g recommended for adults (or 4g if you have high blood pressure).

If that can be reduced to 6g, it could save 6000 lives, avert 5800 heart attacks and stop 4900 strokes a year.

The Health Food Partnership met for the first time in November under the leadership of Assistant Health Minister Fiona Nash.

“The Health Food Partnership will work together on strategies to educate consumers on consuming fresh produce, appropriate portion sizes, and to accelerate efforts to reformulate food to make it healthier,” said Ms Nash.

Between 2009 and 2012 key food manufacturers agreed to reduce the salt in bread, breakfast cereals, simmer sauces, processed meats, soups, pies, potato and corn chips and savoury crackers.

As a result, the amount of salt in our bread fell by 9%, in breakfast cereals by 25% and in processed meats by 8%.

Source: *National Health Reporter, Sue Dunlevy, Sunday Telegraph*

Salt? “Definitely Not”

Less Salt In Home Brand Foods Surprised Researchers

Supermarket home brand foods, long derided as cheap and inferior, contain "consistently and substantially" less salt than pricier, branded rivals, new research shows.

A study of 15,680 products from the shelves of Woolworths, Coles, Aldi and IGA found home brand foods have 17 per cent less salt than their branded counterparts.

The researchers from George Institute for Global Health were surprised to find salt content was an average 27 per cent lower in desserts, 24 per cent in biscuits, 22 per cent in processed meats, and 7 per cent in breads.

But the breakfast cereal category bucked the trend. Salt content in private label cereals was 37 per cent higher.

Professor Bruce Neal, co-author of the study and head of food policy at the institute, said the study showed supermarkets could help lead the way in getting Australians to cut their salt intake.

"Excess salt in food leads to high blood pressure and greatly increased risks of stroke and heart attack," he said.

"Reducing salt in line with WHO recommendations could save thousands of lives every year and hundreds of millions of dollars in healthcare costs."

The global health body has set a voluntary target of cutting salt consumption by 30 per cent by 2025.

The average Australian adult consumes nine grams of salt a day – more than twice the recommended amount.

Professor Neal warned that the study, conducted between 2011 and 2013 and published in the journal *Nutrients* this month, focused on salt and did not assess overall nutritional value.

Lead author Helen Trevena, also from the institute which is affiliated with the University of Sydney, said she hoped the study would shift consumer perception that private labels were inferior.

"This research shows that is not always the case in regard to salt," she said.

"This is good news, especially for families shopping on tight budgets who are more likely to buy private label products, but are also most likely to suffer from health problems caused by high blood pressure."

Coles, Woolworths and Aldi have each made voluntary commitments to reduce sodium content across nine food categories as part of the Australian Food and Health Dialogue initiative, launched in 2009.

The study is good news for the supermarket giants seeking to expand their private label offerings despite some customer disillusionment.

In May, Roy Morgan data revealed nearly half of Australia's 14 million regular grocery shoppers were trying to reduce their grocery bills. But nearly three-quarters said they preferred sticking with their favourite brands.

Source: Sydney Morning Herald

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...



Wishing you and yours a safe and joyous Christmas

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

Email:
Malcolm.Riley@csiro.au

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Berry Pavlova Wreath

Ingredients

- 4 Egg Whites
- 1 cup Caster Sugar
- 1 tsp Cornflour
- 1 tsp Vanilla Essence
- 300 ml Cream
- 250 g Strawberries
- 125 g Raspberries
- 125 g Blueberries



Method

- Preheat oven to 120°C or 100°C fan and grease a large oven tray (a round pizza tray works best for this). On a sheet of baking paper the size of the tray, use a plate as a guide to draw a 23cm circle, then a 13cm circle inside it. Place the paper on the tray, pencil-side-down.
- Using an electric mixer, beat egg whites until soft peaks form. Add sugar, a spoonful at a time, beating until dissolved between each addition until the mixture is thick and glossy. Add cornflour and vanilla and beat briefly, until just combined.
- Using the pencil lines as a guide, scoop large spoonfuls of meringue onto the tray to form a wreath shape, as shown below. Use the back of a spoon to make an indentation in the top of meringue, all the way around the centre. Bake for 1½ hrs, then turn off the oven, prop the door open slightly and leave to cool completely.
- To serve, carefully run a large knife between the pavlova and the paper to loosen it, then slide onto a serving plate. Whip the cream to soft peaks and spoon over the top of the pavlova. Top with the berries. Happy Christmas!

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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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.