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Salt Skip News

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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.

Australians eating almost twice the daily recommended amount of salt, new research shows

New research shows Australians are eating almost twice the daily recommended amount of salt — despite the fact that most think they are being sensible in their salt intake.



VicHealth and Deakin University came up with an innovative way to measure the difference between how much salt people thought they ate and how much they actually consumed.

The researchers said the findings underline the need for food companies to be more transparent about the amount of "hidden salt" in a lot of processed food.

They estimated as many as 800 lives per year in Victoria alone could be saved if we people reduce their salt intake to recommended levels.

Skip the Salt

VicHealth programs executive manager Dr Bruce Bolam told ABC NewsRadio: "Unfortunately while 80 per cent of people recognise that as a population we eat too much salt, only a third of people believe that they personally were eating too much salt."

About 75 per cent of our salt intake comes from processed foods — often in things that people wouldn't expect for example bread, cereals, processed meats, pizza ...

Dr Bruce Bolam, VicHealth

The research was conducted with 2,400 Victorian adults. Most of the results were from an online survey, but the researchers also wanted to gather further information from face-to-face interviews and urine samples.

"We supplemented that with a sample of 250 Victorians through shopping centres who we interviewed, but we also request that they do a quick urine sample for us and amazingly 70 per cent of those participants agreed to take part," Dr Bolam said.

He said the findings were consistent with the best data available in Australia.

Australians eating almost twice the daily recommended amount of salt– Cont.

"Broadly we eat between 8 and 10 grams of salt every day and that's about twice the WHO level which is recommended — and that's right the way across the population here in Victoria and indeed Australia," he said.

"About 75 per cent of our salt intake comes from processed foods — often in things that people wouldn't expect for example bread, cereals, processed meats, pizza ... that's actually what's driving the majority of salt intake in Australia and that's why food reformulation is such an important issue for us."

Source: ABC News Radio

Food companies 'need to be upfront about hidden salt'

Dr Bolam, VicHealth Programs Executive Manager also said food companies in the UK had taken steps to reduce salt in their products which was saving tens of thousands of lives every year through a "health by stealth approach".

He said Australian food companies needed to follow the UK and be more transparent about "hidden salt" in processed foods.

"We need to have tools and resources out there that help make the healthy choice the easier choice for consumers and ultimately a lot of that will be driven by both providing information to consumers but also just taking the salt out of processed foods," Dr Bolam said.



Dr Bolam also mentioned an app called FoodSwitch — put together by the George Institute in Sydney.



It enables consumers to barcode-scan any processed food and it gives a traffic light system to indicate the level of salt in the product. It also recommends some healthier alternatives.



After cardiovascular disease, hypertension is the next leading risk factor driving heart attack and stroke in Australia, according to Dr Bolam.

"It's excess salt intake that by far accounts for the majority of hypertension here in Australia," he said.

Source: ABC News Radio

In old Japanese theatres, salt was sprinkled on to the stage before each performance to prevent evil spirits from casting a spell on the actors.

Sprinkling salt around your home may or may not have the same effect today!

“No salt for me thankyou!”

News in from the UK: Salt consumption down - but not enough

Adults in England have cut their average salt consumption by nearly a gram in the last decade, but at 8g per day it is still above the recommended 6g for good health, figures reveal.

The data from Public Health England is based on measurements taken from a random sample of 689 adults.



Three quarters of the salt we eat is in foods we buy, and there has been a push for industry to cut salt levels.

High salt can raise blood pressure, which increases the risk of strokes.

Voluntary salt reduction targets were first set in 2006 for a range of food categories in the UK that contribute most to the population's salt intakes - for example crisps, butter and margarines, breakfast cereals and bread.

In 2014, fresh targets were set to include popular dishes consumed outside the home, such as sandwiches, ready meals and children's meals in fast food outlets.

Dr Alison Tedstone, chief nutritionist at PHE, said: "While people are having less salt than 10 years ago, we are still eating a third more than we should.

"The majority of the salt we eat is in everyday foods so it's important to check labels and choose lower salt options. Many manufacturers and retailers have significantly reduced the salt levels in everyday foods. However, more needs to be done, especially by restaurants, cafes and takeaways."

Campaigning group Consensus on Action on Salt and Health (CASH) said the nation's salt intake had remained around the 8g per day level for the last few years. It wants more regulation around salt in food.

When shopping for food, you can take steps to cut your salt intake:

- Compare nutrition labels on food packaging when buying everyday items. You can really cut your salt intake by checking the label and choosing the pizza, ketchup or breakfast cereal that's lower in salt. Try choosing one food a week to check and swap when you're food shopping.
- Go for reduced-salt, unsmoked back bacon. Cured meats and fish can be high in salt, so try to eat these less often.
- Buy tinned vegetables without added salt. Do the same with tinned pulses.
- Watch out for the salt content in ready-made pasta sauces. Tomato based sauces are often lower in salt than cheesy sauces or those containing olives, bacon or ham.
- For healthier snacks, choose fruit or vegetables such as carrots or celery sticks. If you are going to have crisps or crackers, check the label and choose the ones which are lower in salt.
- Go easy on soy sauce, mustard, pickles, mayonnaise and other table sauces, as these can all be high in salt.

Source: NHS Choices

Commentary: *Having been in the UK in December and having to manage a no-salt diet for a month – I was very concerned to read this article and its advice. As readers will know, pizza, ketchup, bacon, crisps and crackers, soy sauce, pickles, mayonnaise and other table sauces are absolutely forbidden if you are serious about avoiding salt.*

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...

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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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Salt-free Bread



Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cups lukewarm water
- 3 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 3 tbsp. sugar
- 2 pkgs. rapid rise yeast
- 5-6 cups strong wholemeal or white flour

Method

Put water in large bowl. Add oil and sugar, then yeast. Mix in a little flour and let stand a few minutes until bubbles start to form. Stir in flour (may use mixer) until thick batter. Then add flour slowly until dough starts to come from sides of bowl.

Turn onto floured surface, round into ball. Cover with bowl. Let stand 10 minutes. Knead, adding flour if necessary so it isn't sticky. Dough should feel smooth and soft.

Put into well oiled bowl. Turn so it is covered with oil. Cover with towel. Should double in size in about half hour or a little more. Punch down and divide into 2 loaves.

Put into well-oiled or sprayed bread/loaf tins. Oil tops, let rise until doubled in size. Set in oven. Turn heat to 350 degrees. Bake about an hour or until loaves are brown on top and pull away from sides of pan. Put on rack to cool. Makes excellent toast. If cut into 16 slices, 97 calories per slice. Enjoy!

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). This newsletter is not a substitute for health and medical advice. Readers should always seek the advice of a qualified health professional regarding their health or a medical condition.

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.