



Salt Savvy Challenge



Build techniques for reducing salt in your diet and understand the impact this can have on reducing hypertension

CHALLENGE DESCRIPTION:

Welcome to the Salt Savvy Challenge! This 7-day program is designed to help you reduce your salt intake, understand the impact of salt on your health, and learn practical techniques to manage your diet. By the end of this challenge, you'll be equipped with the knowledge and habits to maintain a healthier lifestyle.

UNDERSTANDING SALT AND ITS IMPACT ON THE BODY

Salt, or sodium chloride, is essential for various bodily functions, including fluid balance, nerve transmission, and muscle function. However, excessive salt intake can lead to serious health issues. High sodium levels can cause the body to retain water, increasing blood volume and, consequently, blood pressure. Over time, this can strain the heart, arteries, kidneys, and brain, leading to conditions such as hypertension (high blood pressure), heart disease, stroke, and kidney disease.

Hypertension is a major risk factor for cardiovascular diseases. Reducing salt intake can **significantly lower blood pressure**, decreasing the risk of heart attacks, strokes, and other related health issues. By making conscious dietary changes, you can improve your overall health and well-being.

Recognizing High-Salt Foods

Health Canada recommends that most Canadians consume 1500 milligrams (mg) per day and not exceed 2300 mg per day, which is the equivalent of just over one teaspoon of salt. Many foods contain hidden sodium, making it important to **read labels** and be aware of common high-salt foods. These include:

- **Processed foods:** Canned soups, frozen meals, and snack foods.
- **Condiments:** Soy sauce, ketchup, and salad dressings.
- **Cured meats:** Bacon, ham, and sausages.
- **Cheese:** Especially processed and hard cheeses.
- **Bread and baked goods:** Many contain added salt for flavour and preservation.

THE CHALLENGE

Each day focuses on a different aspect of salt reduction, from reading food labels and cooking at home to choosing low-sodium alternatives and being mindful when dining out. By participating in this challenge, you'll learn practical techniques to lower your sodium consumption, which can help reduce hypertension and promote better heart health.

Follow the prompts each day to gain different techniques for reducing your sodium intake. At the end of the week reflect on which ones were easiest for you to incorporate in your daily routine and take forward with you.



1

Read Labels: Start by reading the nutrition labels on the foods you eat. Pay attention to the sodium content and aim to **choose products** with lower sodium levels. This awareness is the first step in reducing your salt intake.



2

Cook at Home: Prepare your meals at home using **fresh ingredients**. Cooking at home allows you to control the amount of salt in your food. Experiment with herbs and spices to enhance flavour without adding salt.



3

Reduce Processed Foods: Limit your consumption of processed and packaged foods, which are often high in sodium. Opt for fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains instead.



4

Choose Low-Sodium Alternatives: Look for low-sodium or no-salt-added versions of your favourite foods. Many products, such as soups, sauces, and snacks, have reduced-sodium options available.



5

Rinse Canned Foods: If you use canned vegetables or beans, rinse them under water before cooking or eating. This can reduce the sodium content by up to 40%.



6

Be Mindful When Dining Out: When eating out, ask for your meal to be prepared without added salt. Choose dishes that are steamed, grilled, or baked rather than fried or sautéed, and request sauces and dressings on the side.



7

Monitor Your Progress: Reflect on your week and monitor your progress. Keep a food diary to **track your sodium intake** and note any changes in how you feel. Celebrate your successes and identify areas for further improvement.

CHALLENGE COMPLETE!

Congratulations on completing the Salt Savvy Challenge! Reducing your salt intake is a powerful step towards better health and lower blood pressure. Continue to apply the techniques you've learned, stay informed about the sodium content in your foods, and make mindful choices to maintain a heart-healthy diet.



Congratulations on completing the **Salt Savvy** Challenge

The journey of wellness is ongoing, and each step, no matter how small, is a victory to be celebrated. Keep pushing forward, embracing each day as an opportunity to live your best life.

