

Reduced Sodium Diet

Purpose: Sodium is essential to the body. It is a mineral that helps the body regulate fluid balance. Under certain conditions, excess sodium can cause the body to retain too much fluid. This could be harmful for people with conditions such as high blood pressure or heart disease. These conditions are often managed by reducing sodium in the diet. For many patients, restricting the total amount of sodium to 4 grams a day is enough to reduce harmful fluid retention. However, some patients will have to restrict their total sodium intake to 2 grams a day.

Nutrition: If the patient follows the prescribed sodium limitations and chooses a variety of foods from each of the basic food groups (bread and grains, fruits, vegetables, meat alternatives, dairy products), these diets are nutritionally adequate.

Special Considerations:

1. **Table Salt:** This is a large source of sodium in the everyday diet. It is used in the kitchen in food preparation and added at the table. It is also added to many commercially canned and frozen foods. Table salt is about one – half sodium, so its use must be restricted in these diets.
2. **Finding the Sodium in a Diet:** Sodium occurs naturally in many foods, and some foods contain more sodium than others. One food labels, the sodium content is usually listed in milligrams (mg) per serving. One gram = 1000 mg. So, on a 2 gram sodium diet, a person should have no more than 2000 mg of each day; and on a 4 gram sodium diet, no more than 4000 mg a day. As a helpful guide: for the 4 gram diet, purchase products with no more than 300 mg of sodium per serving. For the 2 gram diet, purchase products with no more than 200 mg of sodium a serving.

Sodium compounds, in addition to table salt, are often added to commercially processed foods. Some of those more commonly used are baking soda, brine, monosodium glutamate (MSG), baking powder, disodium phosphate, or sodium benzoate. Read food labels on all items before purchasing or using.

3. **Common medications:** Antacids, laxatives, and cough remedies often contain sodium compounds. Check with a physician or pharmacist if there is a question about prescription or over-the-counter medications.
4. **Fast food restaurants:** Avoid them because the foods they serve tend to be very high in sodium. When dining in other restaurants, ask that no salt be used in the preparation of your meal.
5. **Salt substitutes:** Never use these unless the physician has approved it. They may replace the sodium with another mineral that could also be harmful to certain patients. Herbs and spices may be used in place of salt to add flavor and variety to meals.
6. **Water softeners:** They exchange the calcium in hard water with sodium from a salt brine. Avoid drinking home or commercially softened water. When purchasing bottled water, check the label to be sure it contains no sodium. Do not use softened water to prepare foods or beverages.
7. **Diet Differences:** A few things that are allowed on the 4 gram diet are not permitted on the 2 gram diet. Follow the guide below:

Differences Between 4 Gram and 2 Gram Diets

4 Gram Reduced Sodium Diet

- Use a total of ½ teaspoon of table salt per day in cooking and food preparation. Do not add salt at the table.
- Limit prepared salad dressings and condiments such as mustard or catsup to a total of 3 tablespoons per day.
- Do not eat Bleu, Roquefort, Stilton, or Gorgonzola cheeses. Limit other natural or aged cheeses to 2 oz. per day.
- Limit buttermilk to 8 oz. per week.
- Limit regular peanut butter to 3 teaspoons per week.

2 Gram Reduced Sodium Diet

- Use no table salt in cooking and food preparation. Do not add salt at the table.
- Do not use commercially prepared salad dressings or condiments such as mustard or catsup.
- Do not eat any natural or aged cheeses.
- Do not drink buttermilk.
- Do not eat regular peanut butter.

Flavoring Food Without Salt:

Onion, garlic, lemon, vinegar, black pepper, and parsley improve the flavor of many kinds of food. For gourmet-type dishes, use fruit, fruit juices, or sweet and sour sauce. Use fresh or dried herbs and spices to flavor foods. Remember that two teaspoons of chopped fresh herbs equals ½ teaspoon of the dried form. Always store dried herbs and spices in a cool, dry place in airtight containers. When flavoring, start with small amounts (1/4 tsp for four servings) and increase to taste. Don't use more than three herbs or spices in one dish. Certain herbs and spices blend better With some foods than with others, so experiment and use the suggestions below as a guide.

Food Guidelines

Breads

Choose: English muffin, white, wheat
pumpnickel, other types of regular or unsalted bread and rolls.

Avoid: Sweet rolls, breads or rolls with salted tops, packaged cracker or bread crumb coatings, packaged stuffing mixes, biscuits, corn bread.

Cereals

Choose: Regular cooked cereals such oats, cream of wheat, rice, or farina, puffed wheat, puffed rice, shredded wheat.

Avoid: Instant hot cereals, any other regular ready-to-eat cereals.

Crackers and snack foods

Choose: All unsalted crackers and snack foods. Unsalted peanut butter.

Avoid: Salted crackers and snack items, regular peanut butter, party spreads and dips.

Pasta, rice and potatoes

Choose: All types of Pastas such as macaroni, spaghetti, Rigatoni, ziti, potatoes, rice.

Avoid: Macaroni and cheese mix, seasoned rice, noodle, spaghetti mix, canned spaghetti,

frozen lasagna, macaroni and cheese, rice, and pasta dishes, instant potatoes, seasoned potato mixes.

Dried beans and peas:

Choose: Pinto beans, white northern beans, black-eyed peas, lima beans, lentils, split pea, etc.

Avoid: Any beans or peas prepared with ham, bacon, salt pork, or bacon grease, all canned beans.

Meats and alternatives

Choose: Fresh or frozen meat, poultry, and fish, low sodium canned tuna and salmon, eggs.

Avoid: Salted, smoked, canned, spiced, and pickled meats, poultry and fish, bacon, ham, sausage, scrapple, regular canned tuna or salmon, cold cuts, luncheon meats, hot dogs, pre-breaded frozen meats, fish and poultry, TV dinners, meat pies.

Fruits and vegetables

Choose: Fresh, frozen, or low-sodium canned vegetables or vegetable juices, low sodium tomato paste and sauce, fresh, canned, or frozen fruit and juices. with sodium sulfite.

Avoid: Regular canned vegetables and vegetable juices, tomato sauce and tomato paste, olives, pickles, relishes, sauerkraut or vegetables packed in brine, frozen vegetables in butter or sauces, crystallized and glazed fruit, maraschino cherries, fruit dried.

Dairy products

Choose: Milk, cream, sour cream, non-dairy creamer, yogurt, low-sodium cottage cheese.

Avoid: Buttermilk, Dutch processed chocolate milk, processed cheese slices and spreads, regular cheese, cottage cheese.

Fats and oils

Choose: Margarine, regular butter, or mayonnaise limit to 4 teaspoons per day, unsalted butter, margarine, cooking oils or shortenings, salt free gravies, cream sauces and salad dressings.

Avoid: Bacon grease, salt pork, commercially prepared sauces, gravies, and salad dressings.

Soups

Choose: Salt-free soups and low- sodium bouillon cubes.

Avoid: Regular commercially canned or prepared soups, stews, broths, or bouillon, packaged and frozen soups.

Desserts

Choose: Gelatin, sherbet, fruit ices, pudding and ice cream as part of milk allowance, angel food cake, salt-free baked goods, sugar, honey, jam, jelly, marmalade, syrup.

Avoid: Regular commercially prepared and packaged baked goods, chocolate candy.

Beverages

Choose: Coffee, tea, soft drinks, fruit flavored drinks that do not contain sodium.

Avoid: Softened water, carbonated beverages with sodium or salt added, check with physician

beverages.

Condiments

Choose: Fresh and dried herbs, lemon juice, low-sodium mustard, Vinegar, Tabasco sauce, low-sodium or no-salt –added ketchup, extracts (almond, lemon, vanilla) baking chocolate and cocoa, seasoning blends that do not contain salt.

Avoid: Table salt, lite salt, bouillon cubes, meat extract, Worcestershire sauce, tarter sauce, ketchup, chili sauce, cooking wines, onion salt, prepared mustard garlic salt, meat flavoring, meat tenderizers, steak and barbecue sauce, seasoned salt, monosodium glutamate (MSG), Dutch processed cocoa.

Sample Menu 2 Gram Diet:

Breakfast

- orange sections ½ cup
- whole wheat toast 1 slice
- cereal ¾ cup
- unsalted margarine 2 tsp
- jelly 2 tsp
- skim milk 1 cup
- coffee
- creamer/sugar 1 tsp

Lunch

- chicken noodle soup ½ cup*
- lean hamburger 3oz
- hamburger bun 1
- sliced tomato 2 oz
- lettuce
- mayonnaise 1 tsp
- unsalted crackers 3
- vanilla wafers 3
- canned peaches ½ cup
- skim milk 1 cup
- coffee
- creamer/sugar 1 tsp

Dinner

- baked chicken breast 3 oz
- baked potato 1 medium
- green beans 1/2cup
- tossed salad
- diet Italian dressing 1 tbsp
- whole wheat bread 1 slice
- unsalted margarine 2 tsp
- angel food cake 1 slice
- strawberries ½ cup

- skim milk 1 cup
- coffee
- creamer/ sugar 1 tsp
- *Low Sodium

This Sample Diet Provides the Following Calories 2090, Fat 55 gm , Protein 105 gm, Sodium 1850 mg , Carbohydrates 300 gm, Potassium 4450 mg

Sample Menu 4 Gram Diet

Breakfast

- grapefruit ½
- cereal ¾ cup
- banana ½
- whole wheat toast 2 slices
- margarine 2 tsp
- jelly or jam 1 tbsp
- 2 % milk 1 cup
- coffee/tea

Lunch

- vegetable soup 1 cup
- lean hamburger 2 oz
- swiss cheese 1 oz
- hamburger bun 1
- sliced tomato 2 oz
- lettuce
- fresh fruit salad ½ cup
- oatmeal cookie 1
- 2% milk 1 cup

Dinner

- low sodium tomato juice ½ cup
- broiled chicken breast 3oz
- brown rice ½ cup
- broccoli spears 2
- hard dinner roll 1
- margarine 2 tsp
- carrot/raisin salad ½ cup
- frozen strawberry yogurt ½ cup
- 2 % milk 1 cup
- coffee/tea

This Sample Diet Provides the Following Calories 2170 , Fat 69 gm, Protein 119 gm, Sodium 4040 mg , Carbohydrates 294 gm, Potassium 3950 mg.

This material does not cover all dietary information and is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care.

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