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Nutrition Nibbles

Volume 2, Issue 3

March 2008

Shake the Habit

It is always within an arm's reach, easy to shake over your plate. It enhances the flavor of all your favorite foods--french fries, steak, and of course, vegetables. Some people are so in love with it, they carry around their own supply! What is this tempting ingredient? SALT!

Salt, or technically sodium chloride, is a natural taste enhancer and food preservative. It is not all upside for this small, white morsel though. Salt has been linked to high blood pressure and causes an increase in blood pressure even in people whose blood pressure is technically within the normal range (meaning their blood pressure could be even lower if they kept a lid on their salt shaker).

Blood pressure is the force of blood against artery walls. It naturally rises and falls during the day but when it consistently remains elevated (or stays above 140/90), it is considered high. High blood pressure is also referred to as hypertension and over time can lead to serious health consequences. **So how much salt is too much? Where do you find it? What can you use instead?**

Your sodium intake should be no higher than 2300 milligrams daily, or the equivalent of 1 teaspoon of table salt. Health experts would love it if people consumed only 1500 milligrams of sodium daily (doesn't sound like much, I know). This lower sodium level has been found to reduce blood pressure even further and is considered an adequate intake to support proper body functioning. What is even more shocking is that most American men consume over 4000 milligrams of sodium everyday without even trying! American women are not too far behind, consuming an average of 3300 milligrams on a daily basis.

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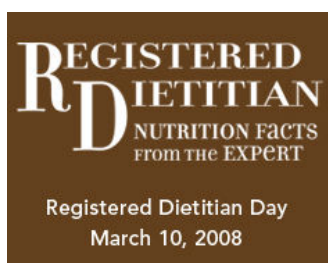


National Nutrition Month ®

March is *my* month—National Nutrition Month ®. This year's theme revolves around looking at your diet as a whole. No one food or meal is going to make or break your healthy lifestyle. Do not think of foods as "good" or "bad" and remember exercise is not "punishment" for choices you have made along the way. So what is the recipe for a healthy body? Balancing tasty, nutritious foods with movement you enjoy will surely find your life well-balanced! Now, go on and make March *your* month!

—Mary

College Corner: Have You Had Your Nutrition Check-Up?



For more information on healthy eating and National Nutrition Month ®, check out: www.eatright.org

You know who your doctor is. But who is your registered dietitian?

"In the same way that you have a physician whom you see regularly to manage your medical needs, everyone should also see an RD routinely for help in managing your nutritional needs," says registered dietitian and American Dietetic Association spokesperson Joan Salge Blake.

Salge Blake encourages all consumers to mark National Nutrition Month and the first annual Registered Dietitian Day on March 10, 2008, by establishing an ongoing relationship with *the* food and nutrition expert, an RD.

Salge Blake, a faculty member at Boston University, says her students – and their families and friends – are amazed to discover how small lifestyle changes, such as adding more vegetables to their daily eating plans, quickly add up and pay big health dividends over time. Registered dietitians use their nutrition expertise to help individuals make just these types of unique, positive lifestyle changes.

"Through annual visits to a registered dietitian for a 'nutrition checkup,' individuals can obtain dietary advice and guidance based on their changing health needs," Salge

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Shake the Habit continued...

Salt is found in everything from cereal to snack foods, soup to fast food. If you start looking at nutrition labels, you will discover sodium in just about everything in the grocery aisle. Because salt is especially high in processed, convenience foods, making your own meals and snacks (where you control the salt shaker) has never looked better for your blood pressure!



There are some ways to shake down or control the amount of sodium in your diet:

- ☺ Never salt your foods without tasting them first
- ☺ Remove the salt shaker from the table altogether
- ☺ Use a sodium-free mix of herbs and spices, called *Mrs. Dash* (look for it in the spice aisle of your grocery store). *Mrs. Dash* makes the flavors of vegetables, salads, meats, soups, and pastas really pop!
- ☺ Season your foods with fresh lemon or lime instead of salt
- ☺ Skimp on the amount of salt you use when cooking
- ☺ When eating out, ask for your restaurant meal to be prepared without salt
- ☺ Start reading labels and look for **low sodium**, **salt-free**, and **no added salt** alternatives

Lowering your salt intake is just one way to help lower your blood pressure. If you have more questions about salt, sodium, a healthy diet and blood pressure, make an appointment to see a dietitian!

Surprisingly Salt-Free Foods

Shredded Wheat Cereal
Frozen Plain Vegetables
Fresh Fruit and Veggies
Dried Beans and Lentils
Unsalted Nuts

Low Sodium Choices

Fresh Meat, Fish, Poultry
Low Fat Dairy
Natural Whole Grains

Have You Had Your Nutrition Check-Up? continued...

Blake says. “These checkups enable you to not only address nutrition and health problems as they occur, but most importantly, prevent problems that are potentially looming down the road.

“Do you have high cholesterol or high blood pressure? Are you dangerously overweight or even just have a few pounds to lose? Don’t wait until you have a stroke or a heart attack. The RD’s role is to take our expertise based on the current nutrition science and personalize it to fit your individual lifestyle,” Salge Blake says.

Article Content Provided by The American Dietetic Association

Remember: RDs, or Registered Dietitians, are the **Real** Nutrition Experts.

“Nutritionists” can be anyone from a personal trainer to a health store employee and may lack the appropriate schooling and qualifications to help you improve your diet and lifestyle. To get your own nutrition check-up, call your Campus Student Health Center and schedule an appointment with the dietitian on-staff.



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