

# NUTRIFAX<sup>©</sup>


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## Sodium and Potassium: Important Minerals

**S**odium is necessary to maintain the balance of our body fluids. It cannot be stored or made by the body and must be consumed in food. Sodium occurs naturally in vegetables, animal foods, and in some drinking water. Americans consume too much salt and sodium rich foods.

**P**otassium helps regulate blood pressure, fluids and is needed for muscle contractions.

“Diets containing foods that are good sources of potassium and low in sodium may reduce the risk of high blood pressure and stroke.”



1 Teaspoon Table Salt  
equals  
approximately 2300 mg sodium

**Good Sources of Potassium:**

Milk	Yogurt
Orange Juice	Bananas
White and Sweet Potatoes	

**BEWARE OF HIDDEN SODIUM – READ THE LABEL!**

- Canned, cured, or smoked meats and fish: bacon, sausage, ham, bologna, canned beef, and hot dogs.
- Many cheeses, especially American cheese.
- Salted snack foods: potato chips, pretzels, popcorn, nuts, and crackers.
- Foods prepared in brine: pickles, olives, and sauerkraut.
- Canned vegetables, tomato products, soups, and vegetable juices.
- Prepared mixes for stuffing, rice dishes, breading and quick breads.
- Dehydrated mixes, dips, soups, and macaroni and cheese.
- Flavorings: flavored salts, monosodium glutamate (MSG), soy sauce, and teriyaki sauce.
- Frozen convenience foods.

### Watch What You Eat!

A high sodium diet may be dangerous for about 10-15% of the American population who are "sodium sensitive." They can cause high blood pressure, a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. A low-sodium diet is effective treatment of established hypertension. Nutritionists recommend that most Americans could benefit by cutting down the amount of salt they sprinkle on food and avoiding the hidden sodium in processed foods.

### Don't Give Up on Flavor

Use herbs and spices as well as fruit juices to season food. Onion, garlic, and celery add flavor and nutrients. However, avoid flavored salts, such as garlic, onion, or celery, which contain sodium. Many people find non-sodium salt substitutes acceptable. **People using blood pressure medication should always check with their physician.**

**READ LABELS** for sodium (Na) content. Some manufactures are now making "lower in sodium" versions of their products.

**Food and Nutrition Services  
can assist in providing nutrition information.  
Call 703-813-4800 and ask for a  
Registered Dietitian.**

