



## Slash the Salt.....for your Blood Pressure



**When you hear the words salt and sodium, you may immediately think about the saltshaker on your table.** Maybe you use it before your meal to enhance the flavor of your food, or perhaps you add a dash while cooking. It may surprise you to learn that just 11% of your sodium intake comes from the salt you cook with or add at the table.

**Most of the sodium Americans consume (71%) comes from ultra-processed, packaged and restaurant food.** Salt is in pizza, bread, burgers, deli meat, chips, pretzels, pickles and condiments, to name a few. These foods are high in sodium because it's used in so many ways — to prevent spoilage, prohibit growth of pathogens, improve appearance and enhance flavor or texture.

**If you've been told to cut back on salt for health reasons,** such as salt-sensitive hypertension or kidney disease, it's not just about avoiding the saltshaker. Your best bet is to eat fewer ultra-processed foods.

**You don't need to banish salt from your diet,** since at least 1,500 mg sodium per day is required for normal body functioning. The trouble is many people get too much (about 3,400 mg per day).

**You can still cook with salt** but try to cut back on using very salty sauces and dressings, such as soy or barbeque sauce. Instead, boost flavor with citrus fruits, such as lemon or lime; herbs, such as basil, oregano and rosemary; spices, such as cumin, cinnamon and coriander; or aromatics, including garlic, onion and ginger.