Eating Less Sodium

Part of healthy eating is eating less sodium, or salt. Does this sound hard? It doesn’t have to be, but you do have to think about it. You need to do more than just not use the salt shaker. After all, almost all foods contain sodium naturally or as an ingredient.

You can start reducing the sodium in your diet by:

- Reading labels to see how much sodium foods contain.
- Limiting packaged foods and restaurant foods, which typically are high in sodium.
- Not adding salt to your food during cooking or at the table.
- Using low-sodium spices and sauces to add flavor to your food. Low-sodium foods can still be tasty!

Limiting sodium may help you feel better and prevent sudden heart failure.

Continued
Get Started on Lowering Sodium

- Talk with your doctor about how too much sodium may affect you and how much you may need to cut back.
- Talk with a registered dietitian (RD). An RD can help you find out how much salt you are eating and find ways to cut back on salt. An RD can also teach you how to choose low-salt foods when eating out and make suggestions for low-sodium recipes and meals.
- Remember that the biggest source of sodium in the diet is not salt added at the table. In general, the biggest source of sodium is processed foods and foods from restaurants.
- If you’d like, keep a sodium record. It can show you how much sodium you eat at a meal or during the day.
- If you don’t cook for yourself, let those who help you know that you want to eat less sodium. Show this information to family members, friends, or senior centers or other organizations.

Avoid high sodium foods, including:

- Smoked, cured, salted, and canned meat, fish, and poultry.
- Ham, bacon, hot dogs, and lunch meats.
- Hard and processed cheese and some types of peanut butter.
- Frozen prepared meals.
- Canned vegetables and soups, broths, and bouillon.
- Salted snack foods, such as chips and crackers.
- Pickles, sauerkraut, seasonings high in salt, and other condiments. These include steak sauce, onion salt, garlic salt, mustard, ketchup, and especially soy sauce. Even light soy sauce is still very high in sodium.
- Most restaurant food, especially fast food like french fries, hamburgers, pizza, and tacos.

Americans get 71% of their daily sodium from processed and restaurant foods.
Reduce Your Risk of the Flu and Pneumonia

It is important to get vaccinated against the flu and pneumonia. Pneumonia is a lung infection that can cause mild to severe illness in people of all ages. Signs of it include coughing, fever, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, rapid breathing or shortness of breath, chills, or chest pain. Many pneumonia-related deaths are preventable through vaccination and appropriate treatment.

Certain people are more likely to become ill with pneumonia:
• Adults age 65 or older
• Children younger than age five
• People under the age of 65 who have underlying medical conditions (like diabetes or HIV/AIDS)
• People ages 19–64 who smoke cigarettes
• People ages 19–64 who have asthma

Prevent pneumonia and other respiratory infections such as colds and the flu by following these simple steps:
• Wash your hands regularly.
• Clean hard surfaces that are touched often (like doorknobs and countertops).
• Cough or sneeze into a tissue, your elbow, or sleeve.
• Limit your exposure to cigarette smoke.
• Take steps to treat, control and prevent conditions like diabetes and HIV/AIDS.

Get vaccinated. Several vaccines prevent infections that can cause pneumonia, including Pneumococcal, Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib), Pertussis (whooping cough) and seasonal influenza (flu) vaccines. Talk to your doctor for more information.

Go online and take charge of your health.
The MVP Healthwise® Knowledgebase is your one-stop resource for the latest health information. Visit mvphealthcare.com and select Members, then Health & Wellness.

Are you due for important health screenings?
Regular screenings are important to help maintain your overall health. For screenings that are appropriate for your age and sex, visit mvphealthcare.com/PreventiveCare and talk to your doctor.
MVP Can Help You Quit

MVP has free support and resources available to help you quit smoking. An MVP Care Manager can provide one-on-one support and MVP may also pay for any prescribed or over-the-counter medicines that can help. Coverage may be subject to benefit limitations.

For more information, call the MVP Care Management referral line at 1-866-942-7966, Monday-Friday from 8:30 am–5 pm.

Free support is also available through New York State Smokers’ Quitline at 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) or nysmokefree.com.

CDC Investigates E-Cigarettes

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) are investigating a recent outbreak of severe lung disease among e-cigarette users, including teens and young adults who were healthy before. MVP encourages members to follow guidance from the CDC with regard to e-cigarette use. Stay up to date on this investigation by visiting CDC.gov and selecting E-Cigarettes.