

Diabetes and Salt

You're likelier to have [high blood pressure](#) if you have [diabetes](#). Getting too much sodium can raise your [blood pressure](#), too. So your doctor or dietitian may ask you to limit or avoid these high-salt foods:

- Salt and seasoned salt (or salt seasonings)
- Boxed mixes of potatoes, rice, or pasta
- Canned meats
- Canned soups and vegetables (with sodium)
- Cured or processed foods
- Ketchup, mustard, salad dressings, other spreads, and canned sauces
- Packaged soups, gravies, or sauces
- Pickled foods
- Processed meats: lunch meat, sausage, bacon, and ham
- Olives
- Salty snack foods
- Monosodium glutamate or MSG (often added to Chinese food)
- Soy and steak sauces

8 Low-Salt Cooking Tips for Diabetes

If you have [diabetes](#), these tips can help you lower the amount of salt in your diet:

1. Use fresh ingredients or foods with no salt added.
2. For favorite [recipes](#), you may need to use other ingredients and delete or decrease the salt you would normally add. You can take salt out of most [recipes](#), but don't try it if the recipe calls for yeast.
3. Try orange or pineapple juice as a base for meat marinades.
4. Avoid canned soups, entrees, and vegetables; pasta and rice mixes; [frozen dinners](#); instant cereal; and pudding, gravy, and sauce mixes.
5. Select frozen entrees that have fewer than 600 milligrams of sodium per serving (140 mg of sodium per serving is considered [low sodium](#)). Check the [nutrition](#) facts label on the package for sodium content. Limit yourself to one frozen entree per day.
6. Use fresh, frozen, or no-added-salt canned vegetables.
7. You can use low-sodium canned soups.
8. Avoid mixed seasonings and spice blends that include salt, such as garlic salt.

After about 2 weeks, your body will adjust and you will not miss the added salt in your diet.

Seasonings to Replace Salt

Herbs and spices are the answer to improving the natural flavors in food without using salt. These salt-free seasonings include:

- Basil
- Celery seeds
- Chili powder
- Chives
- Cinnamon
- Cocoa powder
- Cumin
- Curry
- Dill
- Flavoring extracts (vanilla, almond, etc.)
- Garlic
- Garlic powder
- Lemon or lime juice
- Marjoram
- Mint
- No-salt seasoning blends
- Nutmeg
- Onion powder
- Oregano
- Paprika
- Parsley
- Pepper
- Pimiento
- Rosemary
- Sage
- Savory
- Thyme

Homemade herb and spice blends can help you cut down on your salt use. Below are some mixtures to use for meats, poultry, fish, vegetables, soups, and salads.

Spicy Blend

2 tablespoons dried savory, crumbled
 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground white pepper
 1 tablespoon dry mustard
 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
 2 1/2 teaspoons onion powder
 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
 1/4 teaspoon curry powder

Saltless Surprise

2 teaspoons garlic powder
 1 teaspoon basil
 1 teaspoon oregano
 1 teaspoon powdered lemon rind or dehydrated lemon juice

Herb Seasoning

2 tablespoons dried dill weed or basil leaves, crumbled
1 teaspoon celery seed
2 tablespoons onion powder
1/4 teaspoon dried oregano leaves, crumbled
A pinch of freshly ground pepper

Spicy Seasoning

1 teaspoon cloves
1 teaspoon pepper
2 teaspoons paprika
1 teaspoon coriander seed (crushed)
1 tablespoon rosemary

Restaurants, Salt, and Diabetes

These tips will help you limit salt while eating out at restaurants:

Appetizers

- Select fresh fruit or vegetables.
- Avoid soups and broths.
- Stay away from bread and rolls with salty, buttery crusts.

Salads

- Select fresh [fruits and vegetables](#).
- Avoid pickles, canned or marinated vegetables, cured meats, seasoned croutons, cheeses, salted seeds.
- Order salad dressings on the side, and use small amounts of them.

Main courses

- Choose plain foods, including broiled, grilled, or roasted meat, poultry, fish, or shellfish.
- Select plain vegetables, potatoes, and noodles.
- Ask the server about the low-sodium menu choices, and ask how the food is prepared.
- Request that food be cooked without salt or monosodium glutamate (MSG).
- Avoid restaurants that do not allow for special food preparation (such as buffet-style restaurants or diners).
- Avoid casseroles, mixed dishes, gravies, and sauces.
- At fast-food restaurants, skip the fries, special sauces, [condiments](#), and cheese.
- Avoid salted condiments and garnishes such as olives and pickles.

Desserts

- Select fresh fruits, ices, sherbet, gelatin, and plain cakes.

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Sources

SOURCES: UCSF Medical Center. American Diabetes Association.

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