

#SwitchTheSalt



Potassium-enriched salt – a guide for consumers

WHAT IS POTASSIUM-ENRICHED SALT?

Potassium-enriched salt, sometimes called a 'salt substitute' or 'low-sodium salt' is a product in which some of the sodium chloride is replaced with potassium chloride. It's a healthier alternative to regular salt as it's lower in harmful sodium and higher in beneficial potassium. It can be used as a direct, one-for-one switch for regular table salt (which is 100% sodium chloride) and has a similar taste.

SHOULD I CARE ABOUT HOW MUCH SALT AND POTASSIUM I CONSUME?

Most people eat twice the amount of salt recommended for health, leading to serious health risks like high blood pressure, strokes and heart attacks.

Many of us also don't eat enough of the essential mineral potassium, found naturally mainly in fruits and vegetables as well as some legumes, grains, dairy products and meats. Low potassium intake is also linked to increased risks of high blood pressure, strokes and heart attacks.

SHOULD I SWITCH TO POTASSIUM-ENRICHED SALT AND HOW SHOULD I USE IT?

If you have high blood pressure it is strongly recommended that you switch from using regular salt to a potassium-enriched salt. Scientific research studies in large numbers of people have shown that potassium-enriched salt lowers sodium and increases potassium levels, which in turn lowers blood pressure and reduces the risk of stroke and early death.

In general, you shouldn't add salt to your food, but if you are going to, switch to potassium-enriched salt. You should not need to use any more than regular salt.

DON'T USE POTASSIUM-ENRICHED SALT IF:

- you have advanced kidney disease.
- you are using a potassium supplement or certain medications such as potassium-sparing diuretics (e.g. spironolactone).
- your doctor or other health professional has told you to avoid potassium.

In people that meet any of the criteria above, eating more potassium can lead to excess levels in the blood, which can be life threatening.

In general, you should always talk to your doctor before making any major changes to your diet.

IS IT OKAY FOR MY FAMILY TO ALSO SWITCH TO POTASSIUM-ENRICHED SALT?

Anyone can switch from using regular salt to using potassium-enriched salt unless they meet one of the criteria above. If you're not sure, check with a healthcare professional.

WHAT SHOULD I LOOK FOR WHEN BUYING POTASSIUM-ENRICHED SALT?

You can find potassium-enriched salt at many supermarkets and online stores. Check the ingredients label to find a product with around 25% potassium chloride and 75% sodium chloride (or around 25g of potassium chloride and 75g of sodium chloride per 100g). Ideally, the salt should also be iodised.

If you can't find this mix, using a product with a different potassium to sodium ratio is still better than using regular salt. If you have any concerns, please talk to a healthcare professional.

WHERE CAN I GO TO FIND OUT MORE?

More information on potassium-enriched salt studies, products and use is available at

www.georgeinstitute.org/switchthesalt