

#SwitchTheSalt



Potassium-enriched salt – a guide for health professionals

WHAT IS POTASSIUM-ENRICHED SALT AND HOW DO YOU USE IT?

Potassium-enriched salt, also known as a 'salt substitute' or 'low sodium salt' is a product that can be used as a direct, one-for-one switch for regular table salt and has a similar taste.

Regular salt is 100% sodium chloride, but with potassium-enriched salt, usually 25–66% of the sodium chloride is replaced with potassium chloride.

SWITCHING TO POTASSIUM-ENRICHED SALT FOR COOKING AND SEASONING:

- Reduces sodium chloride in the diet, lowering overall sodium intake. Globally, people consume about twice the amount of salt recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- Adds potassium chloride to the diet, increasing overall potassium intake. More than 85% of the world's population are eating less potassium than recommended by the WHO.

WHAT DO RESEARCH AND CLINICAL GUIDELINES SAY?

Large randomised controlled trials show that using potassium-enriched, sodium-reduced salt can lower blood pressure and reduce the risks of stroke, major cardiovascular events and premature death.

However, a recent review of treatment guidelines for hypertension and chronic kidney disease found only some guidelines recommended potassium-enriched salt, and it called for all guidelines to be updated.

WHAT SHOULD I TELL PATIENTS?

Patients can use potassium-enriched salt as a one-to-one switch in place of regular salt. The following guidelines are suggested:

Strong Recommendation for Patients with Hypertension: Potassium-enriched salt should be recommended to all patients with hypertension, unless they have advanced kidney disease, are using a potassium supplement, are using a potassium-sparing diuretic, or have another contraindication.

Conditional Recommendation for the General Population: Potassium-enriched salt with a composition of about 75% sodium chloride and 25% potassium chloride can be recommended for use by the general population in settings where there is a low likelihood that people with advanced kidney disease remain undiagnosed by the health system and where contraindications to use can be printed on product packaging.

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

Potassium-enriched salt can be found in supermarkets and online stores.

Provided the patient does not have a contraindication to potassium-enriched salt, they should choose one with around one quarter (25%) potassium chloride to three quarters (75%) sodium chloride (around 25g of potassium chloride and 75g of sodium chloride per 100g). Ideally, the salt should be iodised.

If not available, a product with more than 20% potassium chloride will still be beneficial.

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