

Making switches to lower your salt intake

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this project was to show how by making small “switches” can help reduce your dietary salt intake.

METHODS

We identified six major processed food categories that are commonly consumed as part of a daily diet: bread and bakery products, cereal and cereal products, sauces and spreads, meat and meat products, convenience foods, and dairy. Within each of these broad categories we selected specific items for which higher and lower salt equivalent products were available using The George Institute’s 2013 branded food composition database[†]. We focused on processed foods as these constitute a large proportion of most people’s diets and contribute about 75% of dietary salt each day.

For each pair of foods reported, the index product (higher salt value) and lower salt product (lower salt value) are directly comparable.

The sodium data per 100g was used to calculate the quantity of sodium in a serve of each product and then multiplied by 2.5 to convert the sodium value into salt. The same serving size was used for each product to enable a fair comparison[§]. The amount of salt “saved” per serve was calculated by subtracting the amount of salt in the lower salt product from the amount of salt in the higher salt product. The percentage difference in the healthier option was calculated by subtracting the amount of salt in the lower salt option from the amount of salt in the high salt option and dividing the result through the amount of salt in the higher salt option.

RESULTS

The results show that smart switching of foods can be used to make healthier choices of the same food type and lower dietary salt intake at each meal. In this example 5 grams of salt (or one teaspoon) could be saved over the course of a day.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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[†]The sodium values for branded food products used in this project were extracted from The George Institute’s 2013 food composition database. Any changes that may have been made to product formulation since this time are not reflected in the values in this report.

[§]Variation in serve sizes between manufacturers meant it was not always possible to use the same serve size recommended by the manufacturer for the product examples in this report.

Switch the Salt: Comparison of salt in example adult meals in one day

Amount of salt in initial choice		Amount using lower salt options		Salt saved
Breakfast				
Kellogg's Special K Forest Berries 45g	0.41	Woolworths Great Start Berry 45g	0.01	98% less salty
Total breakfast	0.41 g	Total breakfast	0.01 g	Save 0.40 g
Snack				
Arnott's Salada Light Original 50g	1.49	Arnott's Vita-Weat 100% Natural Original 50g	0.61	59% less salty
Kraft Crunchy Peanut Butter 20g	0.30	Coles Crunchy Peanut Butter No Added Salt 20g	0.01	98% less salty
Total snack	1.79 g	Total snack	0.62 g	Save 1.17 g
Lunch				
Wattle Valley Soft Wholegrain Wraps 35g	0.67	Goodness Superfoods Wholegrain Barley Wraps 35g	0.23	65% less salty
Primo Smallgoods Thinly Sliced English Leg Ham 50g	1.45	Don Shaved Leg Ham English Lite 50g	0.94	35% less salty
Woolworths Homebrand Light Cheese Slices 21g	0.84	Kraft Liveactive Light Cheese Slices 21 g	0.64	24% less salty
Rosella Sweet Mustard Pickle 20g	0.37	Spring Gully Green Tomato Pickle 20g	0.14	63% less salty
Total lunch	3.33 g	Total Lunch	1.95 g	Save 1.38 g
Snack				
Coles Fruit Filled Bar (Apple & Cinnamon) 40g	0.32	Weight Watchers Raspberry Pie Bar 40g	0.13	61% less salty
Total snack	0.32 g	Total snack	0.13 g	Save 0.19 g
Dinner				
International Cuisine Chicken Parmagiana Dinner 320g	3.2	Weight Watchers Chicken Parmigiana 320g	1.32	59% less salty
Total dinner	3.2 g	Total dinner	1.32 g	Save 1.88 g
Total salt	9 g	Total salt	4 g	Salt saved 5 g

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