

# SODIUM

Sodium (Salt/Sodium Chloride) serves several important functions in both our body and food. Although sodium is an essential nutrient, very little is needed in one's diet. Unfortunately, many American's consume **DOUBLE** the amount of sodium recommended for good health, which can lead to various complications.

## FUNCTIONS IN OUR BODY

- Helps maintain the right balance of fluids.
- Helps transmit nerve impulses.
- Influences the contraction and relaxation of muscles.

## FUNCTIONS IN OUR FOOD

- Used as a preservative to inhibit the growth of food-borne pathogens.
- Modifies flavor.
- Binds ingredients.
- Enhances color.
- Serves as a stabilizer.

## FACT

If you have high blood pressure, you should limit your sodium intake to less than 1,500 mg/day.

## THE MAIN SOURCES OF SODIUM IN THE AVERAGE DIET.



- 5% added while cooking
- 6% added while eating
- 12% from natural sources
- 77% from processed and prepared foods

## FACT

MSG, Baking Soda, Baking Powder, Disodium Phosphate, and Sodium Nitrate are all salt/sodium containing compounds.

## TOO MUCH SODIUM

Your kidneys regulate the amount of sodium in your body. If sodium levels are too low, your kidneys conserve it. When levels are too high, the kidneys excrete the excess in urine.

If the amount of sodium in your body exceeds the kidney's ability to excrete the excess in urine, the sodium will start to accumulate in your blood.

The accumulation of sodium in the blood attracts water and increases blood volume. Increased blood volume, in turn, makes your heart work harder to move the blood through the arteries. This results in high blood pressure.