

A top-down view of fresh ingredients for a salad. In the center, a wooden cutting board holds a pile of arugula, several green chives, a small wooden bowl of mixed peppercorns, and a small black bowl of pink salt. To the left of the board are two whole avocados and a bunch of fresh dill. To the right is a large bunch of fresh cilantro. Above the board is a head of garlic. In the top left corner, a wooden bowl contains more arugula. The background is a plain white surface.

Nutrition and Heart Health	Decreasing Added Sugars/Sodium Intake	Healthful Eating Patterns	Heart Healthy Recipes
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Blood Lipid (LDL and HDL cholesterol, & triglycerides) Levels & Oxidation		Endothelial Function (The Inner Lining of Blood Vessels)
Inflammation	Insulin Levels & Insulin Resistance	Blood Pressure

There is high-quality evidence that for every 1% of saturated fat calories replaced by:

PUFA

LDL decreases by

2.1 mg/dL

Triglycerides
decreases by

0.88 mg/dL

MUFA

LDL decreases by

1.6 mg/dL

Triglycerides
decreases by

0.35 mg/dL

Carbohydrate

LDL decreases by

1.3 mg/dL

Triglycerides
decreases by

0.97 mg/dL

Reducing Added Sugars

Another important consideration for heart health (and overall health) is reducing added sugars.

The target for overall health is no more than 5 to 10% of calories coming from added sugars.

- On a 2000 calorie diet, this would be 25-50 grams maximum.
- On a 1600 calorie diet, this would be 20-40 grams maximum.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025 recommends $\leq 10\%$ of calories come from added sugar. For an individual consuming 1800-2000 calories per day, ≤ 180 -200 calories from added sugars means ≤ 45 -50 gm added sugar per day.

The American Heart Association recommends ≤ 100 calories/day (25 grams) for women and ≤ 150 calories/day (36 grams) for men.

The current average in the U.S. is 13% of calories coming from added sugars. This is approximately equivalent to 65 grams of added sugar. A good goal is to cut out $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the current amount of added sugar.

Food Sources



Cookies/Wafers



Liquid Sweeteners



Chocolates/Candy



Cakes/Pies



Blood Pressure

Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against artery walls. High blood pressure increases the risk for heart attacks, strokes, chronic heart failure, and kidney disease. The American Heart Association and American College of Cardiology recommend reducing dietary sodium to lower blood pressure.

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There is strong evidence for reducing sodium intake and reducing sodium in the context of a healthy dietary pattern.

There is moderate evidence for:

Reducing sodium
intake to < 2300
mg/day

Reducing sodium by at
least 1000 mg/day to
lower BP, even if the
recommended sodium
intake is not reached

Reducing sodium
intake to 1500 mg/day
may lead to a greater
decrease in BP

1000 mg of sodium can be cut from typical daily intake just by making four swaps and tweaks that each cut sodium by 250 mg or more. Seek choices that promote health.



Identifying Salty Foods

The American Heart Association identifies the six foods that provide the most sodium (42% of average US intake), called **the Salty Six**:

Sandwiches



Pizza



Bread



Poultry



Soup



Deli Meat



An additional 13% of average US intake comes from grain-based mixed dishes and meat, poultry, and seafood mixed dishes. Other common culprits include savory snack foods, condiments, cheese, and processed vegetables and legumes

It can also be helpful to know what different FDA-approved nutrition claims on labels mean, such as:

- Salt/Sodium-Free: less than 5 mg in a serving
- Very Low Sodium: 35 mg or less in a serving
- Low Sodium: 140 mg or less in a serving
- Reduced Sodium: at least 25% less sodium than the “regular” version of the product
- Light in Sodium or Lightly Salted: at least 50% less sodium than the “regular” version of the product

Note that reduced sodium products and light in sodium or lightly salted products can still contain a great deal of sodium, depending on how much sodium is in the “regular” product.



Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH)

The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet is effective at all blood pressure levels but has the greatest effect in people with high blood pressure or people who consume a high-sodium diet. Additionally, it augments the effectiveness of anti-hypertension medications.

In a study comparing the DASH diet with 2400 mg sodium to a standard U.S. diet with 3300 mg sodium, blood pressure decreased by 7.1/3.6 mm Hg with the DASH diet.

Healthful eating patterns (including the DASH diet) have the following characteristics:

Predominantly Plant-focused Diet

Exercise & Stress Management

Calorie Balance/Healthy Weight

Long-term Habit



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