

SALT

February is Heart Month. In thinking what I should prepare our Arizona Daily Star came out with an article **“Reduction of Salt, Live Longer.”** Salt (sodium chloride) intake not only affects blood pressure but can lead to stroke, heart attack and coronary artery disease. We all eat much more salt than we should; majority consuming over 3400 milligrams per day. Recommended daily allowance is 2300 mg and is decreased to 1500 for those over 40 years of age, blacks and people with hypertension. The article stated that 1 teaspoon of salt is 2300 mg.

Very little sodium occurs in natural foods. Most is added during processing. I like their table:

Bread (one ounce-1 slice)	95-210	Frozen pizza(plain cheese) 1 slice	450-1200
Frozen vegetables (1/2 c)	2-160	Salad dressing(2 tbsp)	110-505
Salsa (2 tbsp)	150-240	Tomato soup (1 cup)	700-1260
Tomato juice (1 cup)	340-1040	Potato chips (20 chips)	120-180
Tortilla chips (six lge chips)	105-160	Pretzels (20 mini)	290-560

The main message of the article is to **eat more fresh fruits and vegetables**. Think of it; less preparation is necessary. Also very important is to **read labels of processed foods** noting not only fat content but also sodium content. Again, high sodium intake can affect weight, heart disease, tendency to stroke, and the higher the sodium intake the higher the blood pressure.

A New England Journal of Medicine study concluded just modest reductions in dietary salt could save up to \$24 billion in health-care costs. Not only can we save health care money but we can be healthier. I’ve found that it’s difficult to change dietary habits but once you’ve gone through the change you don’t miss the element you’ve eliminated—mine was sugar.