The Salty Stuff
Salt, Blood Pressure, and Your Health

Salt is essential to our body’s fluids. That’s likely why we evolved to enjoy its taste. On the other hand, anyone who’s gotten a mouth full of seawater knows that too much salt tastes terrible. Maybe your body’s trying to tell you something. It turns out that too much salt can lead to a host of health problems.

“...the best-known effect of sodium on health is the relationship between sodium and blood pressure.”

Dietary salt, or table salt, is made from two chemical elements: sodium and chloride. That’s why its chemical name is sodium chloride. It’s the sodium part that’s been tied to health problems. But since most of the sodium we ingest is from salt, it’s difficult to separate the effects of salt and sodium.

“The best-known effect of sodium on health is the relationship between sodium and blood pressure,” explains Dr. Holly Nicastro, an NIH nutrition research expert. Dozens of studies, in both animals and people, have linked a higher salt intake with higher blood pressure. Reducing salt intake, on the other hand, lowers blood pressure.

Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of arteries as the heart pumps out blood. When this pressure rises—a condition called high blood pressure, or hypertension—it can damage the body in many ways over time. High blood pressure has been linked to heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, and other health problems.

There are two blood pressure numbers, and they’re usually written with one above or before the other. Systolic, the first, is the pressure when the heart beats, pumping blood through the arteries. Diastolic is the pressure when the heart is at rest between beats. The numbers 120/80 mmHg are the ones you should aim to keep your blood pressure below.

About 1 in 3 adults nationwide has high blood pressure right now. Another third have elevated blood pressure, meaning their numbers are high enough to put them at risk to develop high blood pressure. In light of this, Nicastro says, “It’s really important for the majority of U.S. adults to reduce their blood pressure.”

Experts recommend that adults take in less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) of sodium a day—that’s what’s in about 6 grams of salt, or about a teaspoon. People with high blood pressure should shoot for 1,500 mg. But right now, American adults eat an average of about 3,600 mg of sodium per day.

Even small salt reductions can affect your blood pressure. If you can’t find a low-salt alternative to a particular food, it still helps to pick something that’s lower than what you’re already consuming.

Walking for Better Health

Walking is the most popular form of exercise in the United States. Did you know? It can help prevent and manage chronic diseases and even help improve your mood? Even better, it can be done almost anywhere!

5 Benefits of Walking:
1. Maintain a healthy weight
2. Prevent/manage heart disease, high blood pressure and type II diabetes
3. Strengthen your bones and muscles
4. Improve your mood
5. Improve your balance and coordination

ON THE MOVE offers opportunities to walk Monday through Friday in January!

Walk-it-Wednesdays @ GWC: free indoor track use all day; 11 laps = 1 mile
Walk Away the Pounds @ Hi-Liner Activity Center: 11:15am Mon., Tues., and Thurs.

Mark your calendar!

Each month, our newsletter will highlight community activities and learning opportunities. Mark your calendar and don’t miss these informative sessions:

POWERFUL TOOLS FOR CAREGIVERS

Providing care for a loved one at home or in a care facility? Whether down the block or miles away, yours is an important role. This course is for you.

Tuesdays starting Jan. 7 - Feb. 11, 2020
1-2:30pm @ City-County Health District
415 2nd Ave NE, Valley City

Contact: Nicole Klefstad Johnson, OTR
Aging Services Program Administrator
701-253-6396

EXPLORING ND FOODWAYS: GERMANS FROM RUSSIA

Enjoy this delicious taste of history that continues today in the rich heritage of the Germans from Russia culture.

Wednesday, January 8
2:00pm @ Bridgeview Estates

Thursday, January 21
2:00pm @ Legacy Place
5:00pm @ Barnes County Courthouse

Cost: FREE of charge
Presenter: Sue Milender, NDSU Extension

Hawaiian Chicken Stir-Fry

Ingredients:
1 (15 1/4 oz.) can pineapple chunks
2 tbsp. vinegar
1 tbsp. corn starch
1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper
1 tbsp. oil
4 (1 lb.) boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cubed
1/4 c. orange juice
2 tbsp. soy sauce
1/2 tsp. onion powder
1/4 tsp. ground ginger
1 (16 oz.) package frozen broccoli, thawed

Directions:
Drain pineapple, reserving juice. Set aside. For sauce, mix pineapple juice, orange juice, vinegar, soy sauce, cornstarch, onion powder, cayenne pepper, and ginger. Set sauce mixture aside.
Preheat a wok/large skillet over high heat. Add bite-sized chicken pieces to pan and stir-fry until no longer pink. Pour sauce over chicken and cook until thick and bubbly. Cook and stir the mixture 2 mins. more. Stir in broccoli and pineapple and reduce heat. Cover and cook about 1 minute. Serve hot over rice or noodles.
Serves 4; 307 calories; 3g fat; 322mg sodium.

Thank you

These area businesses invest in the health of their teams by sponsoring OTM memberships!
APOC, Barnes County, Barnes County Senior Citizens, CHI Mercy Health, Dacotah Bank, Open Door Center, City-County Health District, St. Catherine School, Valley City State University, Bridge City Dentistry