



SHOULD YOU ADD SALT?

You don't need to have high blood pressure to be harmed by salt. Within 30 minutes of eating a high-salt meal, the flexibility of your arteries may be reduced by half, according to a new study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*—the same amount of havoc wreaked by a fatty meal!

a killer condiment?

The research was conducted in healthy people whose artery function returned to normal after two hours. Nevertheless, impaired blood vessel functioning like this will set you up for a future heart attack or stroke, and the risk is even greater if you already have a chronic heart condition.

So what's the problem with salt? It contains massive amounts of sodium—some 200–300 times what's recommended!

how does your salt rate?

Not all salt is the pure, white, and deadly stuff. Unrefined salt may come in pink, brown, black, or gray. These are misleadingly promoted as good sources of minerals to balance out the sodium.

Health authorities advise us to

choose foods containing significantly more potassium and other minerals compared to sodium. Yet even Celtic sea salt and pink Himalayan rock salt, which fare best, still supply 60–145 times more sodium than potassium! Heart friendlier salt substitutes, based on a mix of sodium and potassium chloride, are available, but these need to be added *after* cooking and are unsuitable for those who have kidney problems.

how much is OK?

No added salt is best. Whole foods naturally contain enough for optimal functioning, and most Western diets already deliver excess sodium from processed foods. If you wish to flavor your food, add lemon juice, herbs, and spices. Fancy salts are just a more expensive way of doing yourself harm.

mg/100 g	Table salt	Sea salt e.g. Celtic	Rock salt e.g. Pink Himalayan	Salt substitute
Sodium	38,178	33,000	38,261	19,500–21,718
Potassium	17	227	350–618	20,671
Magnesium	1	441	16–70	1
Calcium	34	128	205–405	34

Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and coauthor of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve well-being. See www.sueradd.com for more nutrition information.