



Your checklist for helping patients reduce salt



About this checklist:

This checklist is designed to be used alongside the Public Health England and University of Oxford booklet, “Cutting down on salt”, to help patients reduce their salt intake in order to reduce their blood pressure and risk of cardiovascular disease.

These resources have been selected to help you support patients to gain the knowledge, motivation and opportunities they need to make changes to improve their health.



Resources

Please give the patient the booklet “Cutting down on salt”.



Sharing knowledge: key information to highlight

Why cut down on salt?

Eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure. Over time this causes damage to blood vessels, increasing your risk of problems like heart attacks and strokes.

How much salt should we eat?

The recommended maximum amount of salt for adults is **6g** (about a teaspoon) per day. This includes the salt in the everyday foods we eat, as well as salt used in cooking or the salt in meals eaten out.

Foods which are high in salt

In the UK 75% of salt in the diet comes from processed and packaged foods, including foods such as bread, cheese, processed meat (ham, bacon, sausages), savoury snacks (crisps, salted nuts), ready meals, and bakery goods (cakes, biscuits).

There are lower salt alternatives for many of these high salt foods so swapping to a similar lower-salt option is a simple way of cutting down your salt intake.

Patients can find more detailed information, and tips to help them change their diet, in the information booklet.



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Your checklist for helping patients reduce salt (continued)



Health action plan

Goal setting

Research shows that people who set a goal are more likely to change their behaviour and reach their target. What is their personal goal? How will they feel when they achieve this? This could be a “medical” goal, like lowering their blood pressure, or a practical goal like achieving five lower salt swap actions in their weekly shop.

Action plan

What are they going to change? Try the “**three Rs**” strategy: Can they give specific examples of foods they plan to **replace** with lower salt alternatives, **reduce** their portions or frequency of buying, or **refrain** from (e.g foods they might give up entirely or an action such as putting the salt shaker on the table at mealtimes).

When, where and how will they do this?

Self-monitoring

Self-monitoring doesn't have to take long. Even 5 minutes spent reviewing their progress each week could help people stick to their action plans – or change them if needed – and move towards their goals.

Encourage patients to use this “5 minute challenge” to monitor their progress and keep making changes.

Patients can find more detail and template actions plans in the patient information booklet.



Follow up plan

Agree with the patient how you will follow up on their progress.

For example by telephone, face-to-face, or email.

Fill in the last page of the patient booklet with their follow up plan.

To request or download more of these materials please visit:
www.phc.ox.ac.uk/reducesalt