

# Take U.S. dietary sodium guidelines with a grain of salt?

By ACSH Staff — November 10, 2011

We've said it before, but now we'll say it again: Reducing your sodium intake may not only do you no good in fact, it may actually cause harm. According to a new study published in the *American Journal of Hypertension*, low salt intake [may increase](#) <sup>[1]</sup> a person's levels of triglycerides, cholesterol, and other heart disease risk factors. This is no small finding, given the disparity between current U.S. dietary guidelines and the average American's sodium intake. Those guidelines recommend that people over the age of two consume no more than 2,300 mg of sodium daily. However, the average American takes in about 3,400 mg of sodium each day.

The latest research, which analyzed 167 previous studies, found that, although a low sodium diet did lower blood pressure, it also raised levels of cholesterol, triglycerides, the enzyme renin, and the stress hormones noradrenaline and adrenaline all of which can be harmful. Given these results, study author Dr. Niels Graudal of Copenhagen University Hospital observed that people should generally not worry about their salt intake.

As ACSH's Dr. Ruth Kava points out, Although a low-sodium diet may work for the subset of the population that is salt-sensitive, or for people with conditions that put them at risk for hypertension, sweeping recommendations are not applicable to everyone. Obviously, she says, whether one lowers one's sodium intake needs to be an individual decision.

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[1] <http://yourlife.usatoday.com/fitness-food/diet-nutrition/story/2011-11-09/Study-questions-benefits-of-reducing-sodium-in-diet/51137716/1>