

Salt reduction: Good for all?

By ACSH Staff — February 12, 2013

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg can now add reducing the salt content of foods to the long list of regulations he has espoused during his time in office, including reducing trans fats and imposing a ban on large sized sodas. His efforts to regulate salt began in 2010, when under his direction, 30 companies committed to reducing salt content in their products by 25 percent over a period of five years in an effort to lower consumers blood pressure and reduce incidence of heart attack and stroke. He just [announced](#) ^[1] that 21 of those companies, including Kraft, Goya and FreshDirect, have met that goal.

The products targeted by this initial phase are what Bloomberg calls some of America's most beloved and iconic foods, including salsa, dips, bacon, ketchup, barbecue sauce, cold cuts, processed cheese, salad dressing, canned beans and pizza. Although the salt content of these foods is so high that slight alterations may not be noticed by consumers, producers have had to look for substitutes to replace the salt. The most common of these substitutes, according to Russ Moroz, vice president for research at Kraft Foods, is potassium chloride. But along with potassium, other ingredients must be added to make up for the bitter, mineral taste of potassium, and this cocktail of chemical constituents could present unknown risks according to salt industry scientists.

Furthermore, Morton Satin, vice president for science and research at the Salt Institute said that the link between high blood pressure and salt was just a theory, and that reducing salt too much could have harmful effects, like iodine deficiency in children.

ACSH's Dr. Ruth Kava notes Many foods are already produced with lower amounts of sodium, so one wonders what real difference these decreases will make.

ACSH's Dr. Josh Bloom is getting really tired of Bloomberg's incessant meddling. He says, The Mayor's job is to salt the roads when it snows not our food. Enough already.

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[1] http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/12/nyregion/bloomberg-lauds-companies-for-cutting-salt-content.html?_r=0