



Strategies to Reduce Sodium Intake in the United States

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Study Task

- Review and make recommendations about strategies that could be employed to reduce dietary sodium intake to levels recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

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Relevance for the Health of the American Public

- Lowering sodium intake will reduce the adverse effects of excess intake – a vital concern for the vast majority of the population
 - High blood pressure
 - Heart disease
 - Stroke
 - Kidney disease

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Unique Challenges

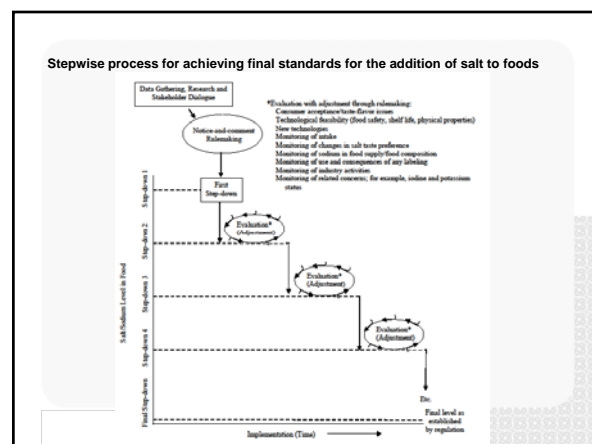
- Roles sodium plays in foods
 - Taste & flavor
 - Food safety & shelf life
 - Texture (functionality)
- Ubiquity of sodium in the food supply

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Primary Recommended Strategy

- A coordinated approach to set standards for safe levels of sodium added to foods using existing FDA authorities to modify the Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) status of salt and other sodium-containing compounds

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Supporting Strategies

- Updated nutrition labeling
 - Federal Government: Change DV of sodium to the AI (1,500 milligrams per day) and revise related claims
 - Congress: Remove labeling exemption for foods intended solely for restaurant/foodservice operations
- Training initiatives for restaurant/foodservice operations
- Enhanced monitoring
- Research

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Supporting Strategies

- A nationally organized campaign to educate the public about the risks of excess sodium intake and healthy food choices, build support for government and industry activities, and support consumers in making behavior changes to reduce sodium intake
 - Educate consumers and patients on:
 - The risks of high blood pressure development across the lifespan
 - The benefits of sodium reduction for all age groups
 - The ubiquity of sodium in the food supply
 - Sodium reduction in the context of an overall diet
 - Will need support from many players including:
 - CDC, NIH, USDA, health practitioners, health insurers, schools, food industry

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Interim Strategies

- Food manufacturers and restaurant/foodservice operators should voluntarily accelerate and broaden efforts to reduce sodium in processed foods and menu items
- The food industry, government, professional organizations, and public health partners should work together to promote voluntary collaborations to reduce sodium in foods

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Conclusion

- The vast majority of the U.S. population is consuming sodium at levels that are simply too high to be “safe.”
- For the past 40 years, voluntary approaches have been attempted but have failed to reduce sodium intake.
- Innovative strategies to reduce sodium added to foods will create a level playing field for food manufacturers and restaurants, and maintain the flavor and taste of foods we currently enjoy.

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Sponsors

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Food and Drug Administration
- National Institutes of Health: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
- Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

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