

# Sodium Reduction in Food Service

## A Resource for Public Health Professionals Partnering with Food Service Providers

This resource is a compilation of tip sheets for public health professionals partnering with food service providers to reduce sodium in foods sold or served. The tip sheets summarize key messages and strategies highlighted by consultants from the Culinary Institute of America during a webinar series.



The National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) has published this tip sheet through a Cooperative Agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC – 5U38OT000203). NNPHI and the Culinary Institute of America have collaborated with CDC to host a webinar series and related technical assistance resources for public health organizations working with food service partners to reduce sodium. The views and opinions in these materials are not necessarily those of CDC or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). For more information about CDC's sodium reduction initiative, please see [cdc.gov/salt](http://cdc.gov/salt).

# Getting Started with Food Service Providers



## Key Strategy 1: ENGAGE THE FOOD SERVICE TEAM

- ✓ Understand the various roles of the food service team, from line staff to management
- ✓ Assess the nutritional composition of the menu and its ingredients
- ✓ Learn the ins and outs of the food service operator's procurement process
- ✓ Discuss food service operator's goals and priorities



## Key Strategy 2: CONTRIBUTE TO SOUND BUSINESS DECISIONS

- ✓ Brainstorm ideas that improve existing business models
- ✓ Focus on increasing flavor without affecting the bottom line
- ✓ Help operators identify relevant training opportunities and associated costs

## The Process of Change



**Engage staff**



**Assess needs and challenges**



**Identify goals**



**Develop strategies**



**Provide training**



**Implement**

**Remember that many operators tend to prioritize business over nutrition – the main goal is to increase sales and profits.**



## RESOURCES

View the Webinar: <http://www.dialogue4health.org/web-forums/detail/tactical-steps-to-sodium-reduction>  
Learn more: <http://www.ciaprochef.com/hmc2015/> and [www.cdc.gov/salt](http://www.cdc.gov/salt)



# Culinary Techniques for Reducing Sodium

# Sodium

## Key Strategy 3: INTRODUCE SIMPLE, COST-EFFECTIVE CHANGES

- ✓ Encourage cooks to reduce added salt by measuring
- ✓ Try to modify existing menu items before creating new ones
- ✓ Find lower sodium versions of common cooking ingredients such as stocks and tomato products used for sauces
- ✓ Reduce portion sizes

## Key Strategy 4: CHOOSE DELICIOUS FLAVORS TO EXCITE AND ENHANCE

- ✓ Use salt-free or low-salt spices and herbs to enhance flavor
- ✓ Create global flavors using items such as citrus, healthy fats, and herbs
- ✓ Dilute common menu items with flavor, such as adding Greek yogurt to creamy salad dressings



## Cooking for Change



Analyze  
nutrition



Identify  
opportunities



Recruit  
culinary  
expertise



Experiment  
in kitchens



Create  
institution-specific  
solutions



Evaluate  
changes



Share successes  
and challenges



**Research has found that sodium reductions of up to 20% are not noticeable to consumers, depending on the food product.**

(Institute of Medicine. Dietary reference intakes for water, potassium, sodium chloride, and sulfate. Washington, DC: National Academies Press; 2004)



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# Modifying Menus and Setting Benchmarks

# Sodium

## Key Strategy 5: ESTABLISH LOWER SODIUM BENCHMARKS

- ✓ Track purchases by food items by category and sodium level
- ✓ Work with food service team(s) and food distributor(s) to procure lower sodium items (e.g., tomato sauce, salad dressing, canned vegetables, etc.)
- ✓ Aim to increase ratio of fresh to processed foods during preparation
- ✓ Ensure goals for lower sodium foods are aligned with the food service operator's business model

## Key Strategy 6: DESIGN RECIPES AND MENUS TO BENCHMARKS

- ✓ Change the “build” of dishes to reduce sodium, such as use smaller buns, adding less processed meats and cheeses, and including more fruits and vegetables
- ✓ Consider healthful side dishes and accompaniments to increase variety and flavor of core menu items
- ✓ Limit portions of bread products on menus to reduce sodium

**From both a consumer and operator perspective, the experience of eating food begins with what's on the menu.**



## RESOURCES

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Learn more: <http://www.ciaprochef.com/hmc2015/> and [www.cdc.gov/salt](http://www.cdc.gov/salt)