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More Reasons to Watch the Salt

Most of us have heard that we should limit our salt. About 30% of us Americans have been told that we have high blood pressure. Our doctors might have told us to never touch a salt shaker again. Then there are the 35% of us who are over 40 years old. Did you know we should limit the salt even if our blood pressure is still okay? African-Americans, with or without high blood pressure, are at higher risk and should avoid salt too.

Now the doctors have found a reason for even more of us to skip it. People who stuck to a low salt diet for as little as 2 weeks has much more flexible blood vessels. The softer and more flexible your blood vessels are, the less likely you'll have a stroke. And people who used a salt substitute with potassium in it had both softer arteries and lower blood pressure.

Not everyone can use the low-sodium salt substitute with potassium. For some people it tastes terribly metallic and bitter. Some people on certain kinds of medications need to stay away from the potassium. But if you can use it, it could be a big help to your health.

Even if you don't add salt to your foods it is hard to keep the sodium levels down. Anyone with or at risk of high blood pressure should try to eat not more than 1500 mg a day. Just one fast food sandwich can take care of that at some places! Lunchmeats, bacon, commercial frozen meals, and many seasonings and condiments are loaded with salt. Many breads, crackers, baking mixes and cheese have a lot of sodium too.

The best foods to choose are fresh fruits, vegetables and plain meats. Brined

and seasoned meats have a lot of added sodium. Choose NO SALT ADDED canned or frozen veggies. If you must get the regular ones put them in colander and rinse them. It won't take all the salt but it will lower it for you. Look for low sodium soups and broth and salt free seasonings and marinades. With enough other flavors in the mix you can gradually work yourself down off the sodium high to healthier levels.

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