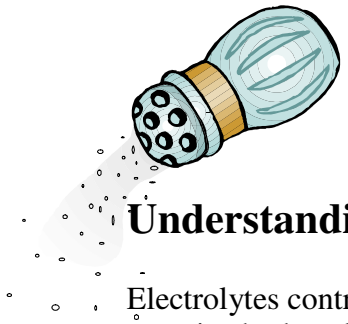

Sodium and Renal Disease

Understanding Sodium In Your Diet

Electrolytes control the fluids going in and out of the body's tissues and cells. Salt (which contains both sodium and chloride) is a major source of electrolytes. When the body becomes dehydrated, it loses fluid and electrolytes. Sodium also contributes to regulating blood pressure and blood volume; helps transmit impulses for nerve function and muscle contraction; regulates the acid-base balance of blood and body fluids.

Sodium is a mineral our body needs in small amounts. Unfortunately, most people eat far more sodium than they need. Salt (sodium) most common use is for seasoning. To enhance the flavor of manufacture, prepared, frozen and canned foods often use high amounts of sodium in their products. Salt is also still used as a preservative.

The recommended intake of sodium for most healthy people is 2,400 milligrams or less each day. This equals the amount of sodium in one teaspoon of salt. Many people are unaware they are consuming so much "hidden" sodium. A person who eats 2 slices of bread each meal consumes 900 mg sodium from bread alone.

To Much Sodium Can Be Harmful

Although sodium is essential for the body functions, too much sodium can be harmful for people with kidney disease. Sodium helps your body to retain a healthy fluid balance. But having renal disease means your kidneys cannot eliminate excess sodium and fluid from your body. As sodium and fluid build up in your tissues and bloodstream, your blood pressure increases and you feel uncomfortable.

Particularly damaging is sodium's link to high blood pressure. High blood pressure can cause more damage to unhealthy kidneys. This damage further reduces kidney function, resulting in even more fluid and waste build up in the body.

Other sodium-related complications include the following: Edema: noticeable swelling in your legs, hands and face; Heart failure: excess fluid in the bloodstream can overwork your heart making it enlarged and weak; Shortness of breath: fluid can build up in the lungs, making it difficult to breathe

Sodium restriction is recommended if blood pressure is high or if you are retaining fluid.

- Low sodium diets range from 1,000 to 4,000 mg based on individual requirements.
- The average range for most low sodium diets is 2,000 to 3,000 mg a day.
- If you have other medical conditions, such as heart or liver disease, you may need to restrict sodium more.

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Controlling Sodium Intake

Controlling sodium intake will help in your fluid retention and high blood pressure. Also, will reduce cramping and blood pressure meds during dialysis. Your dietitian will determine the amount of sodium you can eat each day and be counseled on sources of sodium like the appropriate substitutions for your diet. Your dietitian can help you determine the sodium content of your favorite foods and recommend ways to reduce your sodium intake. At first, your food will taste different with little or no salt, but gradually, you will start to taste more of the natural flavors in foods.

Certain seasoning salt and salt substitutes may contain potassium, which may need to be avoided on the renal diet. This is especially important if your potassium level is too high. If you already use a salt substitute, be sure to inform your dietitian.

Watch out for some of the sodium ingredients used in food processing include: salt, sodium, monosodium glutamate (MSG), baking powder, baking soda, disodium phosphate, sodium benzoate, sodium hydroxide, sodium nitrite, sodium propionate and sodium sulfite.

Tips in controlling your Sodium Intake:

- **Find how much sodium you are allowed to have each day.**
- **Keep record of an accurate food diary.**
- **Read food labels for level of sodium and number of servings er package in foods.**
- **Buy fresh foods – Natural Foods contain little or no salt and are healthier for you than processed foods.**
- **Try substituting fresh herbs and other spices to flavor foods.**
- **Do not choose foods over 400 mg per serving.**
- **Report any changes to your weight or any swelling to your doctor.**
- **Be cautious when eating in restaurants.**
- **Be aware of high sodium convenience foods.**
- **Limit the amount of processed and canned foods in your diet.**
- **Watch your beverage intake.**

WATCH FOR HIDDEN SALT- Avoid eating foods listed here, unless the label states no salt added.

- Canned and processed food.
- Cheese
- Cured meats like ham, sausage, bacon, hot dogs, sandwich meats etc.
- Frozen processed foods, like TV dinners, waffles, meat pies.
- Snacks – salted like chips, crackers, popcorn, pretzels, nuts, peanut butter
- Fast foods – burritos, milk shakes, French fries, tacos.
- Packaged items – antacids, baking soda, bouillon, salted butter

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