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For Immediate Release

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SHAKE THE SALT HABIT

Salt is contributing to a health crisis and the medical community is sounding the alarm. There is reason for concern. Excessive sodium has been linked to the development of high blood pressure (or hypertension). Once developed an individual's risk for heart attack, stroke, kidney and other health problems increases significantly.

More than 50 million Americans (one in four adults) and 1 billion worldwide have high blood pressure and that number is expected to increase as the population ages. In fact, data from the Framington Heart Study suggests that individuals who do not have hypertension at age 55 have a 90% risk of eventually developing it.

Nevertheless, there is good news. According to the National Institutes of Health, adopting a healthy lifestyle is critical for the prevention of high blood pressure. This includes weight reduction if overweight, physical activity, moderate alcohol consumption and a diet low in sodium and rich in fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy products.

CONSUME LESS SODIUM

Unfortunately, lifestyle changes may be difficult, particularly when it comes to eating. We are accustomed to salty foods, thanks in part to our busy lifestyles that have increased our use of convenience and fast foods. According to estimates, Americans consume 4,000-6,000mg of sodium per day – two to three times more than the recommended level of 2,400mg (about 1 teaspoon salt), and about 75% of that comes from processed foods.

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“Salt is an acquired taste,” says Bobbie Mostyn, author of the new book, *Pocket Guide to Low Sodium Foods*, “but you can retrain your tastebuds to enjoy less of it in about 6-8 weeks.” She suggests starting gradually, using a little less salt each day. Not only will your use of sodium decrease, so will your craving. “In fact,” she says, “you might be surprised to discover many foods that used to taste good will soon taste salty.”

TIPS TO REDUCE SALT INTAKE

At Home:

Eliminate the saltshaker. Don't salt before you taste.

Use less salt in cooking. In most recipes salt can be reduced or, in many cases, omitted without compromising the flavor. Use more herbs and spices, like onion and garlic powder. Also, low-sodium bouillon can add extra flavor, as can wine, vinegar, lemon or lime juice.

Use low-salt recipes. Get a good low-sodium cookbook.

At the Supermarket:

Choose lower sodium foods. Eat more fruits and vegetables and use less prepared foods (the less processing, the less sodium). Look for foods labeled *sodium free*, *low sodium*, *reduced sodium*, *unsalted* and *no salt added*.

Read the label. Know how much sodium is in each serving. Be alert to “salty” terms, like *brine*, *cured*, *marinated*, *pickled* and *smoked*.

Eating Out:

Order low-sodium foods. Ask how foods are prepared; choose grilled or roasted entrees without sauces; use oil and vinegar on salads. Request condiments served on the side.

Request salt not be added to your entree.

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HIGH SODIUM FOODS

Bakery items – bagels, breads, donuts and pastries

Canned foods – soups, meats, fish, sauerkraut, beans and vegetables

Convenience foods – frozen dinners, pizza, cereals and packaged mixes (such as pancakes, food “helpers,” stuffing and rice dishes)

Dairy products – cheese and cottage cheese

Deli items – bacon, luncheon meats, corned beef, smoked meats or fish, sardines, anchovies and mayonnaise-based salads (like cole slaw and potato salad)

Snack foods – crackers, chips and dips

Condiments – mustard, ketchup, mayonnaise, salad dressings, pickles, olives, capers and salsa

Sauces – gravy, barbecue, pasta, teriyaki and soy sauces

Baking needs – self-rising flour, baking and biscuit mixes, bouillon cubes, batter and coating mixes, packaged seasoning mixes, breadcrumbs, corn syrup, cooking wines, meat tenderizers, monosodium glutamate (MSG), baking powder and baking soda

Beverages – tomato and vegetable juices, Bloody Mary and chocolate drink mixes

Pocket Guide to Low Sodium Foods is available at bookstores nationwide, online book retailers and from the publisher, InData Publishing, at www.lowsaltfoods.com or 800.897.8440.

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