

Lesson 3:

Eat Smart, Slow Down on Salt

Participants will learn why it is important to limit sodium and how to do it, and learn how to track what they eat using a food diary.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the lesson, participants should:

1. Understand the effect of salt on their blood pressure
2. Recognize ways to limit salt in their diet to help control blood pressure
3. Identify other strategies to help them stay on track with eating smart

Suggested Activities

Learning Objective 1

- Explain that a high sodium diet can increase blood pressure and that reducing salt/sodium in the diet can help control blood pressure.
- Explain the relationship between sodium and salt.

Approximate amounts of sodium in a given amount of table salt:

1/4 teaspoon salt = 575 mg sodium

1/2 teaspoon salt = 1,150 mg sodium

3/4 teaspoon salt = 1,725 mg sodium

1 teaspoon salt = 2,300 mg sodium

- Provide the following recommendations:
 - Reducing dietary sodium intake to 2,400 milligrams (mg) a day can lower the systolic blood pressure by 2-8 mm Hg. Give an example of a day's worth of food that can add up to 2,400 mg sodium.
 - The American Heart Association recommends no more than 2,300 mg a day and an ideal limit of no more than 1,500 mg per day for most adults. (See coach resource: How Much Sodium Should I Eat per Day?) Give an example of a day's worth of food that can add up to 1,500 mg sodium.
- Talk about how sodium can be sneaky and share the Salty Six infographic about the six popular foods that can add high levels of sodium to the diet. (See participant resource: Salty Six Adults)

Learning Objective 2

- Discuss ways to decrease sodium in the diet by replacing salt with spices and eating fewer processed/packaged foods. (See coach resource: Spice It Up and Use Less Sodium.)

Learning Objective 3

- Explain the importance of reading food labels and share tips and resources. (See coach resources: How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label.)
- Share tips for understanding food portion sizes and right sizing their food portions. (See coach resources: Right-Size Your Portions, Suggested Servings from Each Food Group.)
- Explain how to use a food diary to keep track of what you eat. (See participant resources: Food Diary, My Food Diary, Digital Food Tracker.)

Homework

Begin checking food labels for the sodium content of the foods you eat. Check websites for restaurant foods commonly eaten.

Resources

Coach resources:

- How Much Sodium Should I Eat per Day?
- Spice It Up and Use Less Sodium
- How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label
- Right-Size Your Portions
- Suggested Servings from Each Food Group

Additional coach resources:

- Interactive Nutrition Label
- Reading the Label
- Shaking the Salt Habit to Lower High Blood Pressure
- Sodium: Q & A
- Sodium: The Facts
- The Basics of the Nutrition Facts Label
- The Effects of Excessive Sodium on Your Health and Appearance (Infographic)
- Using the Nutrition Facts Label—A How-To Guide for Older Adults

Participant resources:

- Salty Six Adults
- Food Diary – AHA
- My Food Diary – CDC
- Digital Food Tracker – USDA

Additional participant resources:

- Interactive Nutrition Label
- Right-Size Your Portions
- Suggested Servings from Each Food Group
- The Effects of Excessive Sodium on Your Health and Appearance (Infographic)
- Using the Nutrition Facts Label—A How-To Guide for Older Adults

All resources can be found online at startwithyourheart.com/knowitcontrolit/bpcoach.
Username: **coach**
Password: **knowitco@ch**

Participants can access these resources directly at startwithyourheart.com/knowitcontrolit.