



### Salt

Simple ways to make a difference to your salt intake:

1. Buy salt-reduced and no-added-salt foods whenever you can. Salt is a common ingredient in many commercially prepared foods, so moving from processed to fresh food can have the biggest impact.
2. Cut down on salty-tasting foods like anchovies, salted pretzels, potato crisps and salty packet snacks, olives or yeast spread. These perpetuate a liking for saltiness.
3. Gradually sprinkle less and less salt at the table, then aim to ditch the salt shaker entirely.
4. Potassium chloride, a salt substitute, can help during the first few weeks (check with your Doctor or Pharmacist first).
5. Initially, cook recipes with half the quantity of salt, reducing it as you progress. Do not add salt if you include salty ingredients, such as bacon, stock powder, soy sauce, bottled sauces or parmesan cheese. Use unsalted margarine or oil for baking cakes and desserts.
6. Add flavour with herbs, spices, curry powder and aromatic ingredients like lemon juice, orange rind, mustard powder and wine. Use plenty of chilli, onions, garlic and shallots.

### Sugar

Sugar contains no essential vitamins, minerals or fibre. Excess consumption of sugar dense foods leads to an unbalanced diet which is rich in unwanted kilojoules.

Refined sugar is the key ingredient in soft drinks, confectionary, cakes and biscuits. High sugar foods should be restricted when trying to maintain a healthy diet.

#### How much sugar?

In moderation, sugar is unlikely to cause harm and adds to the enjoyment of food. A spread of honey or jam on bread, a teaspoon of sugar in a cup of tea or a wedge of cake would hardly destroy the nutritional value of a whole diet.

Dietary guidelines suggest Australians eat only a moderate amount of sugar and foods containing sugar, rather than 'avoid sugar completely'.

If you are looking to reduce your sugar intake, cut out foods that are low in nutrition like soft drinks or sweets. The sugar in foods such as yoghurt, juices or breakfast cereal, is less of a concern as it comes with a better nutrient profile.

### Why cut back on salt?

Cutting back on salt is important for health because it can help keep hypertension (raised blood pressure) at bay, which is one of the key risk factors for heart disease, stroke and chronic kidney disease.

For the Australian adult population, it is currently recommended that dietary sodium be under 2,300mg/day (equivalent to 6g of common salt, about 1 and a 1/2 teaspoons).\*

### Fat

#### What?

Fats come in many different forms, but most fall into three categories - saturated, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. As “saturation” effects melting point, unsaturated fats tend to be liquid at room temperature (olive, safflower and sunflower oils), whilst saturated fats tend to be solid (the white fat on a lamb chop or the “marbling” in a steak). Fats can also be ‘cis’ or “trans”, “short” or “long” chain. Fats are an efficient way to store energy, with 37kJ/g (compared to 17kJ/g for carbohydrates). That’s why eating them can lead to weight gain.

Fat is used for a range of processes in the body including hormone regulation, carrying fat soluble vitamins, insulating nerve cells, and as a primary source of energy for cells.

#### Where from?

Rich sources of healthy fats (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated) include olive, canola, peanut, sesame, soybean, corn, sunflower and safflower oils, margarines and dressings, nuts, nut butters, seeds, avocado and fish.

Sources of unhealthy fats (saturated and trans fats) include meat, processed meats, chicken skin, cheese, butter, cream, commercial pastries, biscuits, cakes and coconut and palm oils.

#### How much?

It is recommended that fats provide between 20-35% of total daily kilojoules and saturated fat and trans fat provides less than 10 per cent. On average, recommendations are 40-65g of fat per day for women and 55-85g of fat per day for men.\*

**‘Bad’ fats** (saturated and trans fats) can increase bad cholesterol in the blood vessels which can increase risk for heart disease and stroke. These fats should be limited in the diet.

**‘Good’ fats** (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated) can increase good cholesterol in the blood. Good cholesterol can ‘ferry’ out the bad cholesterol from the vessels.

Some ideas to optimise your fat profile include:

- Choose unsaturated vegetable oils, e.g. olive oil
- Include fish in your diet
- Choose low fat dairy
- Buy lean cuts of meat and trim excess fat. Remove skin from chicken
- Limit processed meat
- Limit fried foods and commercially prepared cakes, chips and biscuits
- Limit creamy sauces and dressings

Although there are ‘good’ and ‘bad’ fats, each gram of fat provides 37 kilojoules (9 Calories) of energy. Too much of any type of fat can lead to weight gain in the long term.