

# York University Staff Association Health and Wellness

## News and Views

### Go easy on the salt

It really doesn't matter whether it comes from the best salt marshes, if its white, grey, refined, fine, cooking salt or sea salt – if we eat too much of it, it's not good for our health.

The average person in Canada consumes 3,500 milligrams of sodium a day. That's equivalent to almost 9 grams of salt or nearly 2 teaspoonfuls – way more than the 2,300 milligrams per day suggested by the Dietary Guidelines for Canadians. But the majority of excess salt, isn't spooned into your food, it comes from processed foods. Here are some examples of hidden salt traps that you may find lurking in your refrigerator or pantry...

**Heinz Ketchup** – Two tablespoons of this ketchup has approximately the same amount of sodium as 2 ounces of salted peanuts or potato chips. (over 16% of your daily intake)

**Kraft Singles** – (277mg of salt per slice). Whip up a grilled cheese sandwich with two Kraft singles and two slices of white bread, (white bread contains 180 mg per slice) and you could be consuming close to 1,000 milligrams of sodium.

**Whole Grain Bagel** – (490mg) my favourite ☺, many bagels contain the same amount of sodium as a serving of slim jims, but somehow we don't expect a bagel to run neck-n-neck with a salty tasting snack. If you add a smear of cream cheese (between 100 – 200 mg of sodium) you'll have a breakfast that's nearly one – third of your daily salt intake.

**1% Low – Fat Cottage Cheese** – (360mg) Really? Yep, although its low – cal and protein packed, a serving also dishes up 15% of your daily salt intake. Excess sodium can cause arterial hypertension (high blood pressure) which is the principle risk factor for cardiovascular disease (strokes) it is also a risk factor in osteoporosis, kidney stones, retention of fluid, and certain cancers of the digestive system.

### Sodium is Essential in Small Amounts

Your body needs some sodium to function properly. Salt is essential for the body to perform the function of turning carbohydrates into fat, riding the body of carbon dioxide and is necessary for heart muscle contractions. Sodium helps to maintain the right balance of fluids in your body. Sodium also helps transmit nerve impulses, and influences the contraction and relaxation of muscles. That is why we often experience muscle cramping when we are dehydrated.



### Reducing your Salt Consumption

Here are some tips to help start reducing the amount of salt that you consume in your food on a regular basis.

- Don't use salt when you are cooking (or just use a tiny amount). Try not to keep salt on the table.
- Use no-sodium seasonings as well as herbs and spices to add lots of flavour without salt.
- Buy low-sodium chicken broth and use it to cook with instead of regular broth that is FULL of salt.

- Use fresh meats and produce when you cook. Fresh food has a lot more flavour and won't need as much salt.
- Don't salt your pasta or rice water.
- Buy low or no-sodium versions where available.
- Cut down on fast food and salty snacks. Grab fresh fruits or veggies instead.
- READ THE LABEL. Pay attention to the amount of sodium that is included on the nutritional facts label. (You might be surprised how much salt a can of condensed soup or even a slice of bread has.
- Rinse canned vegetable to remove some of the excess salt.

By implementing just a few of these tips, you can reduce your sodium intake significantly.

Using less salt may be a little tough on your taste buds for a while. We are so used to overly salty food, reducing salt makes food less appealing in the beginning. But don't worry, your taste buds will adjust and you will be able to enjoy all to the true flavours of the foods you are eating.

And since there are no health risks associated with reducing sodium consumption, it may pay for everyone to lower his or her intake. Here are delicious dishes with very low levels of sodium to get you started.

## Lemon Chicken and Noodle Soup

### Ingredients

- 2 tbsp (25 mL) extra-virgin [olive oil](#)
- 1 [onion](#), diced
- 2 [garlic cloves](#), minced
- 1 [carrot](#), diced
- 1 stalk [celery](#), diced
- 1 [sweet red pepper](#), diced
- 1 tsp (5 mL) ground [cumin](#)
- 1/4 tsp (1 mL) [pepper](#)
- 8 cups (2 L) [Chicken Stock recipe](#)
- 4 cups (1 L) packed leaves of fresh [spinach](#), trimmed and chopped
- 2 cups (500 mL) cooked small [pasta](#), (such

- as stars or small shells), 1 cup (250 mL) uncooked
- 2 cups (500 mL) diced cooked [chickens](#)
- 2 tsp (10 mL) grated [lemon rind](#)
- 1/3 cup (75 mL) [lemon juice](#)

### Preparation:

In large saucepan, heat oil over medium heat; fry onion, garlic, carrot, celery, red pepper, cumin and pepper, stirring often, until softened, about 8 minutes.

Pour in stock and bring to boil; reduce heat, cover and simmer until vegetables are tender, about 15 minutes.

Stir in spinach, pasta, chicken, lemon rind and lemon juice; simmer for 5 minutes.

## Sweet and Sour BBQ Sauce

### Ingredients

- 2 tbsp (25 mL) [vegetable oil](#)
- 1 [onion](#), diced
- 2 [garlic cloves](#)
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 1 can [pineapple tidbits](#), drained
- 1/3 cup (75 mL) [cider vinegar](#)
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) cooking [molasses](#)
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) packed [brown sugar](#)
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) [tomato paste](#)
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) [Dijon mustard](#)
- 2 tsp (10 mL) [paprika](#)
- 1 tsp (5 mL) dried [oregano](#)
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) chipotle chili powder or [chili powder](#)
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) [pepper](#)

### Preparation

In large saucepan, heat oil over medium heat; fry onion, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, about 10 minutes.

Add garlic; cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute.

Add tomatoes, pineapple, vinegar, molasses, brown sugar, tomato paste, mustard, paprika, oregano, chili powder and pepper; bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, for about 2 hours or until thickened. Let cool slightly. In blender, puree sauce, in batches, until smooth. (*Make-ahead: Let cool completely. Refrigerate in airtight containers for up to 1 week or freeze for up to 2 months.*)

Hope you enjoy.

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