

Halt the Salt Backgrounder

- 30% of Canadians who have hypertension, have it because they consume too much salt – currently about 3,500 mg per day (about 1.5 tsps).¹
- Just 1 extra tsp per day increases risk of heart attack and stroke by 23%.²
- The World Health Organization estimates that suboptimal blood pressure (systolic blood pressure >115 mmHG) is responsible for 62% of cerebrovascular disease and 49% of ischemic heart disease worldwide.³
- According to HC sodium intake of 1200-1500 mg is adequate for adults and an intake of 2,300 mg/day is the tolerable upper limit for healthy (meaning this is the most one should consume in any given day without possible harm).⁴ Unfortunately, about 80% of dietary sodium is added to food in processing, so fast foods, restaurant food, and processed foods can add significant amounts of sodium to a person’s diet without their knowledge.⁵

Role of Healthcare professional in helping to reduce BP through reducing sodium in patient’s diets

Help patients understand that sodium intakes are a risk factor for hypertension

- 1) Compare their sodium intakes to recommendations by helping them understand how to read labels and ask for sodium content in takeout and restaurant foods
- 2) Learn practical ways to lower the sodium in their daily diets
- 3) Lifestyle Management of Blood Pressure reduction

Ensure patients understand their blood pressure readings and suggest ways to reduce it using lifestyle management.

Remind patients that even when they are on blood pressure medication, lifestyle **management is very important and should not be stopped.**⁶

- 1) Patients with high-normal blood pressure, lifestyle changes can prevent progression to HTN
- 2) Lifestyle management may be sufficient to lower BP
- 3) For patients requiring pharmacotherapy, fewer medications and/or doses may be needed

Lifestyle approaches for managing blood pressure (BP)⁷

Lifestyle and dietary recommendations	Potential decrease to systolic BP
Achieve a healthy body weight eg. Impact for a 10 kg of weight lost in overweight adults	5 to 20 mmHg
Adopt a DASH* eating plan rich in fruit, vegetables and low fat dairy products	8 to 14 mmHg
Engage in 30 minutes of aerobic activity (eg. 30 minutes of brisk walking) >5-6 days /week	4 to 9 mmHg
Reduce dietary sodium intake to no more than 1,500 mg per day	2 to 8 mmHg
Limit daily alcohol consumption to 2 drinks for men and 1 drink for women	2 to 8 mmHg

*Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH)

References: ¹Joffres MR et al. Can J Cardiol 2007; 23:437-33, ²Blood Pressure Canada, Policy Sodium 2007. ³World Health Organization World Health Report 2002, ⁴Canadian Hypertension Society. Recommendations for the management of Hypertension 2009, ⁵ Stats Canada. Health Reports May 2007. ⁷ Chobanian AV et al. JAMA 2003; 289:1560-73

