

Salt in Processed Food



With the increasing pace of life, processed foods are a mainstay in many homes. They are quick and convenient to prepare – the downfall? Processed foods tend to be high in salt. Too much sodium can increase blood pressure, and high blood pressure is a risk factor for heart disease.

Salt is the oldest food additive known to man and is used in a wide variety of food processing techniques. Salt is used to preserve food. Salt helps to give bread a uniform texture and a golden crust. In sausages, it binds the meat together and develops the colour in ham. It can control the fermentation process in foods like cheese. Sodium, the main mineral found in salt, must be listed in the Nutrition Facts label on packaged foods. A few facts:

- 77% of the sodium we eat comes from processed foods and restaurant meals.
- 11% comes from the salt we add to our food
- Only 12% occurs naturally in foods and water.

Let's check out the nutrition Facts label of some popular processed foods:

Food	Amount of Sodium	Serving Size
Ketchup	180mg	1 tablespoon
Canned Chicken Noodle Soup Prepared with water	868mg	1 cup
Plain Salted Chips	168mg	1oz or 28 grams.
Cheese whiz	370mg	2 tablespoons
Frozen lasagna	885 mg	1 cup
Instant noodles	647 mg	1/3 of the package prepared with the seasoning

*For comparison, one teaspoon of salt contains 2300mg of sodium

If you are trying to watch how much sodium you eat, reducing the amount of processed foods is a good start. Or, for the processed foods you enjoy look for reduced sodium varieties.

