

Salt Awareness Week – March 2022

Each year **Action on Salt** organise a national '**Salt Awareness Week**' and an international '**World Salt Awareness Week**' to help raise awareness of the damaging effect of too much salt to our health.

So...what is salt?

Salt is a seasoning that can flavor food and act as a preservative. It's about 60% chloride and about 40% sodium. Nearly all unprocessed foods -- think veggies, fruits, nuts, meats, whole grains, and dairy foods -- are low in sodium. The salt that we do eat helps relax and contract muscles, lends a hand with nerve impulses, and balances the minerals and water we take in.

However adding too much salt to our diet is not good for you. There should be a limit.

Too much salt increases the risk of **high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke**. Cutting down on salt intake could prevent many deaths.

Many people who now know that eating too much salt is bad for their health are actively looking to cut down.

A few years ago, the dangers of salt on health were unknown to the general public. Thanks to efforts of the food industry, government and health organisations, salt is well and truly on the health agenda across many countries worldwide.

Due to this a number of food groups have reduced up to 50% salt now than it did 15 years ago!

With that said however, the UK is still well away from the maximum daily salt limit of 6g, highlighting a need for more action.

Many foods still have lots of hidden salt in them - even foods that don't necessarily taste salty. We all have a responsibility to read the labels and choose foods with less salt, but it is down to the food companies to provide us with low salt options!

Equally it is much harder to eat less salt when eating out in restaurants and ordering takeaway,

With regards to home cooking....

It may seem as though the only way to add flavour to home-cooked meals is with a big pinch of salt, ...but there are so many other ways to ensure our food has flavour...such as replacing salt with chilli, citrus, fresh herbs, garlic, black pepper and spices.

Also cutting back on sauces such as soy sauce, ketchup and salad dressings which can contain lots of hidden salt.

ALL salt is salt (even the posh sea, rock and pink salts!) but there are low-sodium alternatives for those who need a little more time to adjust to a less salty taste.