Low-Sodium Grocery List

Target: under 2,300 mg sodium a day · 1,500 mg on the DASH diet · See the tips on the next page

FRESH VEGETABLES

- ☐ lettuce, dark green
- ☐ spinach
- ☐ tomatoes
- ☐ cucumbers
- ☐ bell peppers
- ☐ mushrooms
- ☐ avocado
- ☐ carrots
- ☐ celery
- ☐ broccoli
- ☐ zucchini / squash
- ☐ kale, collards
- ☐ cauliflower
- ☐ cabbage
- ☐ corn
- ☐ onions
- ☐ garlic
- ☐ potatoes
- ☐ herbs _____
- ☐ other _____

FRESH FRUITS

- ☐ berries
- ☐ bananas
- ☐ apples
- ☐ pears
- ☐ peaches
- ☐ plums
- ☐ melons
- ☐ pineapple
- ☐ oranges
- ☐ grapefruit
- ☐ lemons / limes
- ☐ grapes
- ☐ kiwi
- ☐ other _____

FROZEN

- ☐ vegetable medley
- ☐ plain corn
- ☐ frozen fruits
- ☐ spinach / kale
- ☐ winter squash
- ☐ Brussels sprouts
- ☐ black-eyed peas
- ☐ lima beans

CANNED

- ☐ tomatoes
- ☐ tomato paste
- ☐ tomato sauce
- ☐ pasta sauce
- ☐ beans
- ☐ low-fat soup or broth
- ☐ canned fruit in juice
- ☐ tuna (in water)
- ☐ canned salmon

DRIED

- ☐ beans
- ☐ lentils
- ☐ brown rice
- ☐ macaroni
- ☐ lasagna / fettuccine / spaghetti / penne
- ☐ barley
- ☐ walnuts / almonds
- ☐ vanilla extract
- ☐ cocoa powder
- ☐ prune puree
- ☐ peanut butter
- ☐ herbs: _____
- ☐ spices: _____

CEREAL

- ☐ shredded wheat
- ☐ oatmeal (not instant)
- ☐ other _____

LOW-SODIUM BREAD

- ☐ 100% whole wheat bread
- ☐ whole wheat pitas
- ☐ low-fat tortillas

PACKAGED SNACKS

- ☐ no-salt chips
- ☐ low-sodium crackers
- ☐ nuts (roasted, no salt)
- ☐ dried fruits

CONDIMENTS

- ☐ ketchup*
- ☐ light-sodium soy sauce*
- ☐ balsamic vinegar
- ☐ olive or vegetable oil
- ☐ vinegar
- ☐ Worcestershire sauce*
- ☐ low-fat salad dressing*
- ☐ mayonnaise*
- ☐ low-sugar jam
- ☐ light chocolate syrup

DAIRY

- ☐ fat-free, light yogurt
- ☐ skim milk
- ☐ nonfat ricotta cheese
- ☐ Swiss cheese

POULTRY / FISH / MEAT

- ☐ chicken breast
- ☐ fish (non-breaded)
- ☐ lean meat
- ☐ eggs

© Food and Health Communications, Inc. | foodandhealth.com
Source: Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030 (realfood.gov), released January 7, 2026.

How to Shop Low-Sodium

The rules that make the list work

70% of the sodium we eat comes from processed foods and restaurant meals — not the salt shaker. Which means the most powerful thing you can do for your blood pressure happens **in the grocery store.**

The One Rule That Does Most of the Work

THE 5% / 20% RULE

Find **% Daily Value** for sodium on the Nutrition Facts label.

5% DV or less = LOW. Put it in the cart.
20% DV or more = HIGH. Put it back.

THE EVEN SIMPLER RULE

Choose foods with **fewer milligrams of sodium than calories** per serving.

A soup with 100 calories and 700 mg of sodium fails. A soup with 100 calories and 90 mg passes. You can do this test in three seconds in the aisle.

WHAT THE LABEL WORDS MEAN

Sodium-free	Under 5 mg per serving
Very low sodium	35 mg or less
Low sodium	140 mg or less
Reduced sodium	25% less than the regular version — *which can still be very high*
No salt added	No salt used in processing; may contain natural sodium

"Reduced sodium" is the one that fools people. It's a comparison, not a promise.

Where the Sodium Hides — The Salty Six

Food	Why it's sneaky	Do this instead
1. Bread & rolls	Doesn't taste salty — but you eat it daily	One slice runs 80–230 mg. Compare brands; choose under 150.
2. Pizza	Crust, sauce, cheese and meat are each salted	Homemade, with fresh mozzarella and no-salt-added sauce
3. Sandwiches	Bread + deli meat + cheese + condiments stack up fast	Roast your own chicken or turkey and slice it
4. Cold cuts & cured meats	Salt *is* the preservative	Leftover roast meat, no-salt tuna, egg salad
5. Canned soup	One cup can approach half a day's sodium	Low-sodium broth plus your own vegetables and beans
6. Processed / breaded chicken	Often injected with salt water before you buy it	Plain fresh chicken — read for "contains up to X% solution"

How to Make Food Taste Good Without Salt

ACID — start here. Lemon, lime, vinegar. Acid brightens food the way salt does. **When a dish tastes flat and you reach for the salt, try lemon first.** This is the single best substitution there is.

AROMATICS. Garlic, onion, shallot, ginger, chile.

UMAMI. Mushrooms, tomato paste, roasted vegetables, nutritional yeast. Umami-rich foods make food taste *saltier than it is* — use that on purpose.

HEAT & SPICE. Black pepper, smoked paprika, cumin, chili powder, red pepper flakes. Toast them in a little oil for 30 seconds before adding liquid — it changes everything.

FRESH HERBS, at the end. Heat destroys their aroma. Stir them in off the heat.

BROWNING. Roast instead of boil. Sear. Toast. Browning creates flavor that didn't exist in the raw ingredient. It's free — and it's what salt was standing in for all along.

Your taste buds will adjust. A preference for salt is learned — and it can be unlearned. Most people find food tastes right again within **two to four weeks** of cutting back, and that food they used to love now tastes too salty. **Give it a month before you decide.**

Track Your Swaps

Swap I made	Instead of	Sodium saved	How did it taste?

© Food and Health Communications, Inc. | foodandhealth.com
Source: Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030 (realfood.gov), released January 7, 2026.