



## Six Ways to Solve the Sodium Problem

You can feed an army on a tight budget with frozen pizza and microwave meals, but there's still a price to pay.

Processed foods are high in sodium (salt). Too much sodium in your diet leads to high blood pressure, heart disease, and kidney problems. It also starves your bones of calcium.

About 102,000 people die each year from health problems linked to sodium. Most people take in 3,500 mg of sodium per day or more. However, you should aim for no more than 1,500 mg per day.

Here are six ways to solve the sodium problem:

- **Read food labels** to check for sodium. (Ex: 1 cup of canned corn has 571 mg of sodium. 1 cup of frozen corn – boiled, drained, no salt added – has 2 mg of sodium.)
- **Choose low-sodium alternatives** whenever possible.
- Before you eat out, **look up the nutritional value of menu items** on the restaurant's website. Then choose low-sodium options.



- **Eat more fruits and vegetables,** and less processed food.

- **Drink water** instead of soda.

- **Drink real fruit juice** instead of soda. (One cup of grape juice has 3 mg of sodium. One cup of grape soda has 55 mg of sodium.)

Take the Scoop on Sodium quiz [tinyurl.com/3zogggy](http://tinyurl.com/3zogggy)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.  
U.S. Department of Agriculture.  
American Heart Association.

## Enough Zucchini for Everyone

Something strange may happen on Aug. 8. It's National Sneak Some Zucchini Onto Your Neighbor's Porch Night. Across America, homegrown zucchinis may appear on doorsteps and porches of the unsuspecting. It's a creative solution, especially if the zucchinis in your garden are winning a battle with the tomato plants over which is more popular at the dinner table.



prevent many age-related diseases. And beta-carotene in zucchini helps support your eyes, skin, and immune system. August is the perfect time to enjoy zucchini and other summer squash. A recent study found that steaming zucchini is the best way to preserve its nutrients. It's best to eat the skin too, where the most antioxidants are found.

This nutrient-dense gourd is a rich source of antioxidants and beta carotene. Zucchini contains vitamins A and C and other antioxidants that help

Try these zucchini recipes: [tinyurl.com/ovoo65u](http://tinyurl.com/ovoo65u)

There are hundreds of ways you can enjoy this great-tasting gourd. Make your own zucchini bread, casserole, or pasta dish, and share some with your neighbor.

International Journal of Food Science and Nutrition.  
United States Department of Agriculture.



## Are Your Feet Making You Fat?

Did you know an estimated 72 percent of Americans do not exercise because of foot pain? A recent survey found that people reported pain

in their feet more often than any other part of the body. More than toothaches, knee problems, and even back pain.

Foot pain can be a serious problem that can keep you tied to your recliner and TV. And it can cause you to give up on exercise. Are your feet making you fat?

Aching feet can keep you from exercising, which can lead to weight gain. Being overweight can stress your bones and muscles, and put extra stress on your feet and ankles. This can cause tendon inflammation in your feet, pain in your heels or toes, and other foot problems. Yet, a recent study on foot pain found that people only visit a doctor when the problem impacts their lifestyle, causes extreme pain, or requires surgery.

If being overweight is the source of your foot pain, you don't have to wait around to exercise. Try low-impact activities like swimming or biking. Get help from a nutritionist to make healthier food choices and shed a few pounds. And make an appointment to see a podiatrist. In many cases, new shoes, orthotics, and physical therapy can help get you back on your feet without surgery.

Tips for Healthy Feet [tinyurl.com/m2rpxzz](http://tinyurl.com/m2rpxzz)

American Podiatric Medical Association.  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## Obesity Diagnosis May Improve Medical Care

Obesity is often caused by a long history of poor eating habits and lack of exercise. And it's a big problem in the United States.

It is a major risk factor for heart attack, stroke, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes. An estimated 35.9 percent of all adults are obese. Another 33 percent are overweight.

And even though it's a major health problem, it hasn't been recognized as a disease until now.

The American Medical Association recently classified obesity as a disease. This new classification may improve

medical care for obese people. And it may encourage insurance companies to cover obesity drugs, surgery, and counseling to help people lose weight.

It's an important recognition that may help many people live longer, healthier lives. If you are obese, proper treatment, diet, and exercise can help you lose weight and lower your risk for other chronic diseases. If you want to know if you are obese, pick up a tape measure and wrap it around your waist at your belly button. Then take a look at the number. If your waist circumference is 40 inches or more (men) or



35 inches or more (women) you meet the definition.

Body Mass Index (BMI) is another measurement tool used to determine obesity. It's calculated using a weight-to-height ratio to estimate body fat levels. If you have a BMI of 30 or higher, you are medically classified as obese. If you are overweight or obese, talk with your healthcare provider about a weight-loss plan that includes eating healthier and exercising more.

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.  
American Medical Association.  
American Heart Association.*

Calculate your Body Mass Index  
[tinyurl.com/b53foz](http://tinyurl.com/b53foz)



### Live Longer – Exercise Now!

Everyone wants to live a long and healthy life. But age-related diseases can impact the quality of life

and mortality for millions of people. However, a recent study found one key ingredient that may help you enjoy your golden years.

Exercise. Researchers looked at the exercise habits of 18,670 people over a 40-year period. They also looked at health claims once these people were age 70 and older. Those who exercised regularly when they were younger cut their risk for chronic diseases by 20 percent decades later.

If you're a middle-aged adult, you might not think you have time to exercise. The demands of your career, family, and other responsibilities may seem more important. But if you want to enjoy your retirement years, you need to invest in regular exercise now.

Make a plan to exercise 30 to 60 minutes on most days. Try walking, jogging, or any activity that interests you. And look for ways to be more active daily. You'll feel better and live longer.

*Archives of Internal Medicine.*

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

*National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.*

Try these simple exercises  
[tinyurl.com/btv962f](http://tinyurl.com/btv962f)

## Improve Heart Health with Pistachio Nuts

If you're hungry for a snack, try pistachio nuts. A recent study suggests that pistachios could reduce your risk for heart disease.

The study participants followed a controlled eating plan for four months. In the first stage of the study, they ate regular meals without pistachio nuts. Researchers then measured their LDL, or "bad" cholesterol levels.

In the next stage, participants ate the same foods. But this time pistachios were added to meals and snacks.

Researchers found that the pistachios helped lower bad cholesterol levels by 9 to 12 percent. This is an important finding for heart health. That's because lower LDL cholesterol levels reduce a person's risk for blood clots, blocked arteries, and heart attacks.

Pistachio nuts contain high levels of antioxidants, also

found in leafy green vegetables and brightly colored fruit. Antioxidants help prevent plaque build-up that can damage your heart. Pistachio nuts are also a good source of fiber. Fiber can help lower bad cholesterol levels and reduce your risk for heart disease. Add pistachios to your salad, or enjoy a handful as a snack. (Just don't overdo it. A 1-ounce serving of pistachios contains 160 calories.)

So watch your portion size.

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

*Journal of Nutrition.*



### ASK THE Wellness DOCTOR

**Q:** What are the best ways to reduce the risk of heart disease?

**A:** Go to [www.wellsource.info/wn/ask-heart-disease.pdf](http://www.wellsource.info/wn/ask-heart-disease.pdf) to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

To ask your question, email: [evan@wellsource.com](mailto:evan@wellsource.com), subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.

**Health Challenge:** "Eat More Veggies" available at: [www.wellsource.info/wn/hc-eat-more-veggies.pdf](http://www.wellsource.info/wn/hc-eat-more-veggies.pdf)

Eat 2-3 cups of vegetables a day.