

Shake the Salt Habit

Sodium Learning Activity



Action Schools! BC



5

SODIUM

By making informed choices, we can significantly cut back on the amount of sodium we consume, often while eating similar foods. Students will work together to create a classroom display showing the sodium content of a variety of common foods, and will develop an understanding of the lower sodium food alternatives to choose from.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS



BIG IDEAS

- Understanding ourselves and the various aspects of health helps us develop a balanced lifestyle.
- Personal choices and social and environmental factors influence our health and well-being.

CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES:

- Describe the impacts of personal choices on health and well-being.
- Identify, apply, and reflect on strategies used to pursue personal healthy-living goals.

CONTENT

- Practices that promote health and well-being, including those that prevent communicable and non-communicable illnesses.
- Sources of health information and support services.
- Food choices to support active lifestyles and overall health.



FIRST PEOPLES PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH CONNECTIONS



RELATIONSHIPS AND ENVIRONMENTS

- Students work together to provide a list of salty and non-salty snacks.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Teaching in this activity helps students make informed choices on the amount of sodium they eat and develop an awareness of choosing lower sodium foods.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Invite a local chef into the classroom to speak to healthy eating while being sodium conscience.

OUR SCHOOL POLICIES

- Make healthy eating a part of the classroom environment.

PREPARATION

- Review the *Sodium* section of the *Healthy Eating Overview* (included with this activity).
- Photocopy one *Shake the Salt Habit Handout* for each group of students (included with this activity).
- Provide display-making materials (paper, ruler, markers, scissors, glue, etc.) for each group.

IMPLEMENTATION IDEAS

- Explain to students that most of us eat too much sodium, more than double the amount of sodium we need. Almost everyone can benefit from eating less sodium.

- Divide students into nine groups and assign each group one of the nine pairs of foods found on the following page in order to create a *Shake the Salt Habit* classroom display.
- Students build the display for their pair of foods, creating name labels for each food (and/or drawing their foods). Groups should show the difference in sodium content between their two foods, demonstrating the amount of sodium (mg) in each with a double bar graph. Have students create a double bar graph, with sodium (mg) on the y axis, and their two foods each represented by a bar on the x axis.
- Invite students to access *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide - First Nations, Inuit and Métis* to perhaps incorporate the values, traditions and food choices of First Peoples.
- Have students calculate the % Daily Value of sodium (as used on Nutrition Facts Tables) that their foods contain. To do this, calculate: X mg sodium (from the Nutrition Facts Table) ÷ 2,400 mg = Y x 100 = % Daily Value (%DV). 15% Daily Value or more is a lot for one food item.

ANSWER KEY provided.

NOTE: 2,400 mg is used to determine the % Daily Value for Nutrition Facts Tables. This number is actually higher than the Upper Limit for sodium for all age groups.

- Guide a discussion about how providing this information allows people to make informed decisions. Ask students where they can find this information in a grocery store (answer: on the *Nutrition Facts* table). Making a responsible decision supports a sense of personal self-worth.

EXTENSION OF LEARNING

- Have students identify two food items (either to which they have access or from product information found online), and have them add the sodium content of those items to add to the classroom display.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES



- Healthy Families BC (www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/topic/sodium)
- HealthLink BC (www.healthlinkbc.ca)
- Call 811 and speak with a registered dietitian
- Sodium 101 (www.sodium101.ca)
- Health Canada - *Sodium in Canada* - <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/sodium/index-eng.php>

NAME _____

Shake the Salt Habit

1

Low Sodium Vegetable Juice Cocktail

(125 ml)
89 mg sodium

vs

Vegetable Juice Cocktail

(125 ml)
345 mg sodium

2

2 Processed Cheese Slices

(42 g)
610 mg sodium

vs

Cheddar Cheese

(50 g)
311 mg sodium

3

Dill Pickle

(65 g)
833 mg sodium

vs

Cucumber

(65 g)
2 mg sodium

4

Unsalted Mixed Nuts

(35 g / 60 ml)
4 mg sodium

vs

Potato Chips

(50 g)
330 mg sodium

5

Hawaiian Pizza

(271 g) (15 cm)
1180 mg sodium

vs

Homemade Pizza

(whole wheat pita, unsalted
tomato sauce, veggies, cheese)
(189 g) 467 mg sodium

6

Grilled Chicken Burger

with lettuce and tomato,
without sauce
(75 g) (chicken, bun, lettuce,
tomato) 250 mg sodium

vs

Cheeseburger

(228 g) (double patty,
vegetables, condiments)
921 mg sodium

7

Homemade Vegetable Noodle Soup

(250 ml)
91 mg sodium

vs

Instant Ramen Noodle Soup

(250 ml)
750 mg sodium

8

4 Pieces of Vegetable Sushi and Soy Sauce

(104 g) sushi (15 ml) soy
1138 mg sodium

vs

4 Pieces of Vegetable Sushi

(104 g)
100 mg sodium

9

Fast Food Hot Dog or Veggie Dog

(45 g) bun (15 ml) ketchup
820 mg sodium

vs

Roasted Chicken Sandwich

with low fat caesar
dressing (15 ml)
430 mg sodium

ANSWER KEY: SHAKE THE SALT HABIT – % DAILY VALUE OF THE PAIRS OF FOODS

1

**Low Sodium
Vegetable
Juice Cocktail**

4% Daily Value

VS

**Vegetable
Juice Cocktail**

14% Daily Value

2

Cheddar Cheese

13% Daily Value

VS

**2 Processed
Cheese Slices**

25% Daily Value

3

Dill Pickle

35% Daily Value

VS

Cucumber

0% Daily Value

4

Potato Chips

14% Daily Value

VS

**Unsalted Mixed
Nuts**

<1% Daily Value

5

Hawaiian Pizza

49% Daily Value

VS

Homemade Pizza

19% Daily Value

6

Cheeseburger

38% Daily Value

VS

Grilled Chicken Burger

with lettuce and tomato,

without sauce

10% Daily Value

7

**Instant Ramen
Noodle Soup**

31% Daily Value

VS

**Homemade Vegetable
Noodle Soup**

4% Daily Value

8

4 Vegetable Sushi

4% Daily Value

VS

**4 Vegetable Sushi
and Soy Sauce**

47% Daily Value

9

**Fast Food Hot
Dog or Veggie Dog**

34% Daily Value

VS

**Roasted Chicken
Sandwich**

with low fat caesar dressing

18% Daily Value

HEALTHY EATING OVERVIEW

SODIUM

This section will explain why it is important to look at how much sodium is in the foods we consume.

KEY MESSAGES

- Sodium is a mineral found in salt.
- All types of salt are high in sodium.
- Most of us eat too much sodium; more than double the amount we need. Healthy children only need 1000-1500 mg of sodium per day; healthy adults only need 1500 mg of sodium per day.
- Food labels can help you make healthy food choices.
- Over 75% of sodium we eat comes from processed foods such as cheese, deli meats, pizza, sauces and soups.
- Pre-packaged foods, ready-to-eat foods, fast foods, and restaurant meals are often high in sodium.

Reference: Healthy Families BC (<https://www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/topic/sodium>)

Why Sodium?

When children consume too much sodium, they develop a preference for high sodium foods, which results in less healthy choices throughout their life. Teaching children about salt or sodium and creating an environment where lower salt choices are readily available supports their health and learning. Sodium is found in salt (sodium chloride) and other products like baking soda (sodium bicarbonate), monosodium glutamate (MSG), and sodium nitrite/nitrate, which is used for curing meat. It is the sodium in salt which can be harmful to our health.

The *Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools* include sodium as one of the criteria for classifying foods into groups that determine whether the food or beverages can be sold to students in public schools.

Eating too much sodium can be harmful to your health.

Adapted from: Sodium 101 (<http://www.sodium101.ca>)

Recommended Resources

- Healthy Families BC (www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/topic/sodium)
- Sodium 101 (www.sodium101.ca)
- Dietitians of Canada – Sodium Sense (<http://www.dietitians.ca/Your-Health/Nutrition-A-Z/Blood-Pressure/Sodium-Sense-factsheets.aspx>)

