

Survey reveals lack of salt source knowledge

Monday 5 October 2009



<http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2009/oct/saltsurvey>

More than three quarters of people (77%) are not aware that bread and breakfast cereals are among the daily foods that contribute most salt to our diet, a new Food Standards Agency survey reveals. The survey's publication marks the launch of the latest stage of the Agency's work to reduce people's salt intake.

The Agency's new advertising campaign, launched today, is urging people to pay closer attention to the salt levels in the foods they are buying. The campaign features foods that make significant contributions to the salt intakes of UK adults and children. The salt levels of these foods vary across brands, so the campaign encourages people to reduce the amount of salt we eat by checking labels on foods and choosing those that are lower in salt. Too much salt can lead to high blood pressure, which triples the risk of heart disease and stroke and doubles the chance of dying from these diseases.

Rosemary Hignett, Head of Nutrition at the Food Standards Agency, said: 'Salt intakes are coming down, but if we are to get closer to meeting our target of reducing intakes to a maximum of 6g a day for adults, and lower levels for children, people need to become more aware of the foods which contribute the most, as it isn't just the obvious things we need to watch out for as far as salt is concerned.

'We're not suggesting people stop eating these foods. In fact, we encourage people to eat bread and breakfast cereals, as they are an important part of a healthy diet. But we are saying take a look at the labels to find those that are lower in salt. This could be a supermarket own-label product, and maybe one from the "value" range. If so, any cost saving is an added bonus.

'We've been working closely with food manufacturers and retailers to encourage them to use less salt in their foods, and are pleased with the progress that is being made. But there is still a wide variation of salt levels in different brands, which is why it is so important that people check the labels.'

About the survey

More than 2,000 people across the UK were asked about their attitudes to salt. When asked to pick the top three from a list of the 10 foods that contribute the most salt to our diets, only 13% of people mentioned bread, and 12% said breakfast cereals.

The survey also found that many people (40%) believe that supermarket "value" ranges are higher in salt than other ranges, although this isn't necessarily the case. Sometimes the cheapest are amongst the lowest in salt. In addition, supermarket own-label versions of some foods, including bread, are often lower in salt than the branded versions.

Other highlights from the survey include:

- when asked to pick the top three contributors from a list of the 10 foods that contribute the most salt to our diets, the foods most commonly mentioned were crisps and snacks (73%), ready meals (65%) and meat products (36%), but only meat products are actually in the top three
- 85% of people tend to stick to the same brands of foods they buy regularly, such as bread, ketchup and breakfast cereals. However, a quarter of these people (26%) said they would change from their usual brand if they knew that a lower salt option was available
- 37% of respondents were either 'very concerned' or 'quite concerned' about the amount of salt they eat

Background to the campaign

Around 75% of the salt we eat comes from everyday foods. Foods that contribute the most salt to our diets are not necessarily the saltiest, but the ones we eat most often. The top three foods that contribute salt to our diets are bread, followed by meat products, then breakfast cereals.

In the UK we are eating 8.6g salt a day on average which, although much higher than the recommended 6g, is almost a gram less than we were eating before the Agency launched its salt reduction programme in 2004. With the majority of the salt we eat coming from everyday foods, the Agency wants people to be more aware of this fact, and that it's possible to reduce the amount of salt we eat simply by checking labels, comparing products and choosing the ones with less salt.

The science behind the story

The Agency's advice on salt intake for adults and children is based on sound science, underpinned by the recommendations of the independent Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) which carried out a thorough and comprehensive risk assessment on salt and associated health outcomes.

The compelling evidence for an association between salt and blood pressure is described in detail in [SACN's report, Salt and Health \(2003\)](#). SACN identified and evaluated the evidence relevant to an association between salt intake and health outcomes from a wide range of published scientific evidence (approximately 200 studies) that had become available since the Committee On Medical Aspects Of Food And Nutrition Policy (COMA) work in the early 1990s, and the recommendations made at that time to reduce the salt intakes of the UK population to 6g.

SACN concluded that the evidence for a link between salt intake and blood pressure had increased since 1994. The current high levels of salt habitually consumed by the population raise the risk of high blood pressure, which increases the risk of stroke and premature death from cardiovascular diseases. SACN confirmed that the population as a whole would benefit from reducing their intake to a maximum of 6g per day. SACN also set lower recommended maximum levels of salt intake for babies and children. The 6g target is supported by many medical and research bodies including the British Medical Association and the Medical Research Council.

Related links

[Arolwg yn dangos bod halen yn destun dryswch](#)

[Check the label by phone](#) Find out about the salt phone application

[Salt Omnibus Survey: 2009](#)

 (pdf 244KB)

[Shoppers still unaware where salt is hidden](#) Please read Press Release

More advice from our eatwell website

[Salt](#) Are you having too much salt?

Shoppers still unaware where salt is hidden

Monday 5 October 2009

Over three quarters of people (77%) are not aware that bread and breakfast cereals are among the top salt-contributing foods in our diet, reveals a new Food Standards Agency survey.

About 75% of the salt we eat comes from everyday foods. Foods that contribute the most salt to our diets are not necessarily the saltiest, but the ones we eat most often. The top three salt-contributing foods are bread, followed by meat products, then breakfast cereals.

When asked to pick the top three from a list of the 10 foods that contribute the most salt to our diets, only 13% of people mentioned bread, and 12% said breakfast cereals.

The Food Standards Agency's new advertising campaign on TV, radio and in print, is urging people to pay closer attention to the salt levels in the foods they are buying. The campaign features foods that make significant contributions to the salt intakes of UK adults and children. The salt levels of these foods vary across brands, so a simple way to reduce the amount of salt we eat is to choose the ones that are lower in salt.



[See the salt campaign TV ads](#)

The survey also found that many people (40%) believe that supermarket value ranges are higher in salt than other ranges. However, this isn't necessarily the case and sometimes the cheapest are among the lowest in salt. In addition, supermarket own-label versions of some foods, including bread, are often lower in salt than the branded versions. The only way of knowing for sure is by checking the labels.

Other highlights from the survey include:

- When asked to pick the top three contributors, from a list of the 10 foods that contribute the most salt to our diets, the foods most commonly mentioned were crisps and snacks (73%), ready meals (65%) and meat products (36%).
- About 85% of people tend to stick to the same brands of foods they buy regularly, such as bread, ketchup and breakfast cereals. However, a quarter of these people (26%) said they would change from their usual brand if they knew that a lower salt option was available.
- 37% of respondents were either 'very concerned' or 'quite concerned' about the amount of salt they eat.

In the UK, we are eating 8.6g salt a day on average, which, although much higher than the recommended 6g, is almost a gram less than we were eating before the Agency launched its salt reduction programme in 2004. With the majority of the salt we eat coming from everyday foods, people need to be more aware of where the salt in their diet comes from, and that it's possible to reduce this amount simply by checking labels for salt, comparing products and choosing the ones with less salt.

Rosemary Hignett, Head of Nutrition at the Food Standards Agency, said: 'Salt intakes are coming down, but if we are to get closer to meeting our target of reducing intakes to 6g a day, people need to become more aware of the foods which contribute to intakes, as it isn't just the obvious things we need to watch out for as far as salt is concerned.

'We're not suggesting people stop eating or even cut down on bread or breakfast cereals, because they are important part of a healthy diet. But we are saying take a look at the labels to find one that is lower in salt. This could be a supermarket own-label product, and maybe one from the 'value' range. If so, any cost saving is an added bonus.

'We've been working closely with food manufacturers and retailers to encourage them to use less salt in their foods, and are pleased with the progress that is being made. But there is still a wide variation of salt levels in different brands, which is why it is so important that people check the labels.'

Notes to editors

1. The advertising campaign will go live on 5 October with the first TV advert aired on ITV1 at 7.15pm during the advert break in Emmerdale.
2. Print and radio advertising will focus on bread, ketchup, cereal and pasta sauce. TV adverts will focus on pizza, pasta sauce, sandwiches and ready meals. Please call if you would like copies of the adverts.
3. The survey was conducted as part of the UK wide TNS face-to-face omnibus. In total, 2,267 adults aged 16 and over were interviewed between 21–30 August 2009.
4. Across the UK, salt levels in bread range from 0.7g/100g to 1.5g/100g. This means that somebody who eats four slices of bread during a day could reduce their daily salt intake by 1g, by switching from the highest to the lowest salt bread.
5. Owners of smart, or web-enabled phones who want to check their shopping's salt content can access a handy application that has been created for the campaign. iPhone users can download a free app from the Apple store that will enable them to calculate whether a food is high, medium or low in salt or sodium content. The application allows users to check the Agency's recommended daily limit for salt and get tips to reduce it. With a shake of the phone the tip changes. Go to the Apple store and search for 'salt' or visit <http://www.food.gov.uk/saltapp>
6. Too much salt can lead to high blood pressure, which triples the risk of heart disease and stroke and doubles the chance of dying from these diseases.
7. The 0.9g reduction we have achieved so far means we have prevented more than 6,000 premature deaths and are saving the economy £1.5bn every year.
8. **The FSA salt campaign**
The salt campaign launched in September 2004 as part of the Agency's strategy to reduce population average salt intakes to 6g.

The first phase of the salt campaign featured Sid the Slug and focused on raising awareness of too much salt as a health issue. Phase 2, launched in October 2005,

featured talking food packets and raised awareness of the 'no more than 6g a day' message and checking labels for this information. Phase 3 in March 2007 built on this awareness, reminding consumers that 75% of the salt we eat is already in everyday foods.

9. **The science behind the 6g**

The Agency's advice on salt intake for adults and children is based on sound science, underpinned by the recommendations of the independent Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) which carried out a thorough and comprehensive risk assessment on salt and associated health outcomes.

The compelling evidence for an association between salt and blood pressure is described in detail in the SACN's report, Salt and Health (2003). The SACN identified and evaluated the evidence relevant to an association between salt intake and health outcomes from a wide range of published scientific evidence (approximately 200 studies) that had become available since COMA's considerations in the early 1990s, and the recommendations made at that time to reduce the salt intakes of the UK population to 6g.

The SACN concluded that the evidence for a link between salt intake and blood pressure had increased since 1994. The current high levels of salt habitually consumed by the population raise the risk of high blood pressure, which increases the risk of stroke and premature death from cardiovascular diseases. The SACN confirmed that the population as a whole would benefit from reducing their intake to 6g per day. The SACN also set lower recommended maximum levels of salt intake for babies and children. The 6g target is supported by many medical and research bodies including the BMA and the MRC.

<http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/fss/salt/>

Salt

Are you having too much salt? You might not think so. But every day 26 million adults in the UK eat too much salt. You could be eating too much without realising because about 75% of the salt we eat is already in the food we buy. If you want to cut down, the good news is there are plenty of simple things you can do.



Why cut down on salt?

Cutting down on salt will lower your blood pressure and reduce your risk of stroke and heart diseases.



How much salt should we eat?

Find out how much salt adults, children and babies should eat.



Which foods contain salt?

Most foods contain salt – but some contain a lot more than others.



Checking the label

Checking the label is crucial if you want to find out how much salt is in the food you buy.



Salt tips and myths

Follow our tips and check out the myths to help you cut down on salt.

Why cut down on salt?



Eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure, which triples your risk of developing heart disease or stroke.

And since many people in the UK eat too much salt, that means that lots of people would benefit from cutting down. These are some of the benefits:

- Cutting down on salt reduces blood pressure, whether or not your blood pressure is high to start with.
- When your blood pressure goes down, your risk of developing heart disease and stroke goes down too, whatever your age.
- If you have high blood pressure, cutting down on salt could lower your blood pressure after four weeks. Try to make this a permanent change to carry on seeing the positive effects.
- You may start to notice a wider range of flavours in food, as your taste buds adjust to having less salt.

Adults should eat no more than 6g of salt a day. Reducing the UK's average daily salt intake for adults to 6g could prevent about 17,500 premature deaths a year.

Blood pressure

It's possible to develop high blood pressure at any age. In England and Scotland about a third of people have high blood pressure, also called hypertension.

It's sometimes called the 'silent killer', because most people with high blood pressure have no symptoms and don't realise they have it.

People with high blood pressure are three times more likely to develop heart disease or have a stroke than people with normal blood pressure. And they are twice as likely to die from these diseases.

In the animation below, nutritionist Sam Montel explains how too much salt can raise your blood pressure and damage your body. Turn up the volume if you want to hear her commentary, or alternatively you can read the text that goes with each scene.

After each scene, click on the next number to continue. You can replay any scene by clicking on it again.

[Watch how too much salt damages your body](#)

Heart disease and stroke

- Coronary heart disease is the most common cause of death in the UK, with about 94,000 people dying each year.
- Stroke is the third biggest killer and a leading cause of severe disability in the UK. More than 250,000 people live with disabilities caused by stroke.
- In 2006, about 55,000 deaths in the UK were caused by stroke.

You can reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke by cutting down on salt, eating a healthy diet, being active and maintaining a healthy weight.

[Healthy heart](#)

How much salt should we eat?



Adults should eat no more than 6g of salt a day. Children should have even less.

6g of salt is about a teaspoonful. But remember we're not just talking about the salt you add to your food because most of the salt we eat is already in everyday foods such as bread, breakfast cereal, pasta sauce and soups.

How much salt should babies have?

Babies need only a very small amount of salt – less than 1g (0.4g sodium) a day up to 12 months. Their kidneys can't cope with larger amounts of salt.

Babies who are breastfed will get the right amount of salt through breast milk. Infant formula contains a similar amount.

Once your baby is eating solid foods (after six months), remember not to add salt to food you make for your baby or give to him or her. And be careful not to give him/her foods that aren't made specifically for babies, such as breakfast cereals and pasta sauces, because these can be high in salt.

[Find out more about feeding your baby](#)

How much salt should children have?

Children under 11 years old should have less salt than adults, because they are smaller.

The daily recommended maximum for children depends on their age:

- 1 to 3 years – 2g salt a day (0.8g sodium)
- 4 to 6 years – 3g salt a day (1.2g sodium)
- 7 to 10 years – 5g salt a day (2g sodium)
- 11 and over – 6g salt a day (2.4g sodium)

Remember these are **maximums** for children. It's better for them to have less.

When you're buying foods, even those aimed at children, remember to check the information given on the labels so you can choose the ones lower in salt.

Remember there is no need to add salt to your child's food.

If children have too much salt, this could affect their health in the future. And it could also give them a taste for salty food, which means they're more likely to continue eating too much salt when they grow up.

[Weaning your baby](#)

[Children](#)

Which foods contain salt?



Most foods contain some salt. But it's the foods that are high in salt we need to watch out for because eating these can make it very easy to have too much salt. This is why it's important to choose foods that are lower in salt, when you can.

Some foods are almost always high in salt because of the way they are made – you can still enjoy them, but try to have these in smaller amounts, or eat them less often.

With some foods, such as bread and breakfast cereals, it's because we eat a lot of them that they contribute a lot of salt to our diets and not that they're necessarily high in salt. For these foods, and for foods such as pasta sauces and tomato ketchup, there can be a really big difference between different types and brands. So next time you're shopping, take the time to compare the salt levels on a few similar products. And always try to choose the ones lower in

salt. Making small changes like this can make a big difference to how much salt you eat, especially if it's a food you eat a lot of.

Foods that are often high in salt

Try to eat smaller amounts of these, or have them less often.

- Anchovies
- Bacon
- Cheese
- Chips (if salt added)
- Gravy granules
- Ham
- Olives
- Pickles
- Prawns
- Salami
- Salted and dry roasted nuts
- Salt fish
- Smoked meat and fish
- Soy sauce
- Stock cubes
- Yeast extract

Foods where some brands/recipes are high in salt

Compare the labels on similar foods and choose the ones lower in salt.

- Bread products such as crumpets, bagels and ciabatta
- Pasta sauces
- Crisps
- Pizza
- Ready meals
- Soup
- Sandwiches
- Sausages
- Tomato ketchup, mayonnaise and other sauces

Checking the label



Checking the label and choosing foods that are lower in salt is one of the best ways to cut down. When most people think of salt, they think of shaking it on their food, or adding a pinch to cooking, but 75% of the salt we eat is already in the food we buy. So even though it's important to try to get out of the habit of adding salt, we also need to be careful about the salt in everyday foods.

By looking at the salt content on the label you can:

- compare similar products and find out which is lower in salt
- find out if the food is high, medium or low in salt
- work out how much salt will be in the portion you would eat

How can I compare the salt content of different foods?

When you're comparing the salt level of different food products, look at the nutritional information on the labels and make sure you're comparing like with like. The easiest way is to check the figure for salt per 100g on both labels. Choose the one that is lower in salt – even if there is quite a small difference in salt content, choosing the lower one can help you cut down on salt, especially if it's a food you eat a lot of.

If the label also tells you how much salt is in one serving or one slice, remember that the servings won't always be the same size from brand to brand – and they may also not be the same amount you would eat.

[back to top](#)

How can I tell if a food is high in salt?

Here is a quick way to tell if a food is high in salt by looking at the nutritional information on the label.

Look at the figure for salt per 100g.

High is more than 1.5g salt per 100g (or 0.6g sodium)

Low is 0.3g salt or less per 100g (or 0.1g sodium)

If the amount of salt per 100g is in between these figures, then that is a medium level of salt.

Foods produced by some supermarkets and manufacturers have 'traffic light' colours on the front of the pack, which show you if a food is high (red), medium (amber) or low (green) in fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt. For a healthier choice try to pick products with more greens and ambers and fewer reds.

[Find out more about traffic light labelling](#)

How do I know how much salt is in a portion of food?

Look at the nutritional information on the label. If the label gives a figure for salt per 100g, all you have to do is work out how much salt is in the amount you will eat. So if you're eating 500g, you would multiply the figure for 100g by 5. Or use the calculator below to work it out.

The label might also tell you how much salt (or sodium) is in the whole pack or in part of the pack. Remember that the serving size listed on the label may not be the same as the amount

you will eat and it may be different from brand to brand.

If you only have a figure for sodium, work out how much sodium is in the amount you will eat. And then multiply this by 2.5 to find the amount of salt. (See What's the difference between sodium and salt? below.)

Salt calculator

Enter the amount of salt per 100g:
<input type="text" value="0.00g"/>
Enter the weight of the serving (g):
<input type="text" value="100g"/>
<input type="button" value="Calculate"/>

[back to top](#)

How can I work out how much salt I'm eating?

It would be very difficult to calculate exactly how much salt you eat in a day, because you would need to know the salt content of each food and measure the exact quantities you eat.

But if you find out the amount of salt in a few of the foods you normally eat, then you'll see how easy it can be to eat more than 6g in one day. So if you eat a 200g ham sandwich that contains 1.6g salt per 100g, then that would be 3.2g salt, which is more than half of an adult's daily maximum of 6g.

What's the difference between sodium and salt?

Salt is also known as sodium chloride. So sodium is part of salt. Having too much sodium could increase your blood pressure.

Lots of food labels tell you how much salt is in 100g of the food. Sometimes they only give a figure for sodium, or they might give both.

Sodium x 2.5 = salt

If you know how much sodium is in a food, you can work out roughly the amount of salt it contains by multiplying the sodium by 2.5. So if a portion of food contains 1.2g sodium, then it contains about 3g salt. Or use the calculator below to work it out.

Your browser is not JavaScript-enabled. This calculator will not work. Please follow the "How long to cook" section

How much salt?

Amount of sodium (g) per 100g

 g

Weight of pack / serving(g)

 g

Age

- 1-3 yrs
- 4-6 yrs
- 7-10 yrs
- 11+ and Adults

Sometimes sodium is listed in milligrams(mg). There are 1,000mg in 1g. So 600mg = 0.6g and 1200mg = 1.2g

Results

Approx g of salt per pack/serving

 g %

Salt tips and myths



There are lots of simple ways to reduce the amount of salt you eat, whether you're eating at home or eating out. Take a look at our salt tips to see what you can do. There are many myths about salt and sometimes these can stop people trying to cut down, so test your knowledge by checking out our salt myths.

Eating at home

- Compare the labels on different types of bread and choose the ones lower in salt. Supermarket own-label bread is often lower.
- Go for reduced-salt back bacon in your bacon sandwich. And try adding some slices of tomato instead of ketchup.
- Switch to breakfast cereals with no added salt, such as shredded wholegrain wheat cereals, some muesli or home-made porridge. Or compare the labels on your favourite cereals and choose the ones lower in salt.
- Go for tinned veg and pulses without added salt.
- Watch out for the salt content in bought pasta sauces – compare the labels and choose the one that is lower in salt. Often tomato-based sauces are lower than cheesy sauces or those containing olives, bacon or ham.
- For healthier snacks try to choose fruit or vegetables like carrot or celery sticks, a teacake or a fruit bun. If you are going to have crisps or crackers, check the label and choose the ones lower in salt.
- Go easy with soy sauce, mustard, pickles and mayonnaise – these can all be high in salt.
- Try having just a small amount of smoked foods such as smoked meat and fish, or eat them less often, because these can be high in salt.
- Compare the labels on different ketchups and choose the one lower in salt –own-label ketchup is often lower. Or try to use less.
- Try not to add salt automatically when you're cooking or about to eat. Often people only use salt out of habit.

Cooking

There are lots of ways to add flavour to your cooking without using any salt.

- Add fresh herbs to pasta dishes, vegetables and meat.

- Marinate meat and fish in advance to give them more flavour.
- Use garlic, ginger, chilli and lime in stir fries.
- Add a little red wine to stews and casseroles, and white wine to risottos and sauces for chicken.
- Make your own stock and gravy, instead of using cubes or granules, or look out for reduced-salt products.
- Try roasting vegetables such as red peppers, tomatoes, courgettes, fennel, parsnips and squash to bring out their flavour.
- Squeeze lemon juice onto fish or seafood.
- Try using different types of onion – brown, red, white, spring onions, shallots.
- Make sauces using ripe flavourful tomatoes and garlic.
- Use black pepper as seasoning on pasta, scrambled egg, tomatoes etc. instead of salt.

Eating out

If you're eating in a restaurant or café, or ordering a takeaway, you can still eat less salt by making some smart choices.

- When you order a pizza, choose vegetable or chicken toppings instead of pepperoni, bacon, or extra cheese.
- If you're having a pasta dish, choose one with a sauce based on tomatoes, vegetables or chicken, rather than bacon, cheese or sausage.
- At the sandwich bar, go for fillings such as chicken, egg, mozzarella, or vegetables such as avocado or roasted peppers, instead of ham or Cheddar cheese. And try having salad and low-fat mayonnaise instead of pickle or mustard, which are usually higher in salt.
- If you're having a Chinese or Indian meal, go for plain rice because this is lower in salt than egg-fried rice or pilau rice.
- At the fish and chip shop, ask for your food without salt, then add it yourself to taste, and maybe try having a little less – you can still have plenty of vinegar.
- Instead of a full English breakfast, go for a poached egg on toast with mushrooms and grilled tomatoes, or have just bacon or a sausage.
- Ask for salad dressings or sauces on the side, so you only have as much as you need. Some dressings and sauces can be high in salt, as well as fat.
- Taste your food before adding salt automatically – the chef will have seasoned the dish already, so you shouldn't need to add more.
- If you're having a burger, try having it with just some salad in the bun and avoid toppings that can be high in salt, such as bacon, cheese and barbecue sauce.

Salt myths

I can't be eating too much salt because I don't add it to my food – FALSE

About 75% of the salt we eat comes from everyday foods such as bread, some breakfast cereals, soups, sauces and sausages – so it's easy to eat too much salt without adding any yourself.

Food has no flavour without salt – FALSE

If you're used to foods that are high in salt, or adding lots of salt to your food, you could miss it when you first cut down. This is because our taste buds get used to high levels of salt. So, at first, you could find some foods bland without it.

But our taste buds can get used to eating less salt in about eight weeks and after that you're more likely to enjoy food with less salt, or no salt at all. Salt can hide subtle flavours, so you might prefer some foods with less salt, once your taste buds have had time to adjust.

You can tell what foods are high in salt because they taste salty – FALSE

Some foods that are high in salt don't taste very salty. Sometimes this is because they have lots of sugar in them as well, for example some breakfast cereals.

Also, our taste buds get used to high levels of salt, so you might not notice the saltiness of some foods. When people get used to eating less salt their taste buds become more sensitive. So sometimes when they eat a food they used to eat all the time, they are surprised to find how salty it tastes.

Only old people need to worry about how much salt they eat – FALSE

Eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure at any age. It's true that you have less chance of developing heart disease or stroke in your 20s or 30s than when you're older. But if you have high blood pressure when you're young, you're still at greater risk than someone the same age with normal blood pressure.

Sea salt is better for you than table salt – FALSE

It doesn't matter how expensive salt is, where it's from, or whether it comes in grains, crystals or flakes – it all contains sodium and it's the sodium in salt that can raise your blood pressure if you have too much.

You need more salt in hot climates because you sweat so much – FALSE

We only lose a small amount of salt through sweat, even in extremely hot places. So there's no need to eat more salt during hot weather. But it's important to drink plenty of water to keep your body hydrated.

If I cut down on salt my body won't have enough – FALSE

It's actually very difficult to eat too little salt. This is because it's in so many everyday foods, such as breakfast cereals, bread, soups, sauces and ketchup. And people in some countries survive on a fraction of the amount of salt eaten by people in the UK.

I'd know if I had high blood pressure – FALSE

Many people with high blood pressure have no symptoms, so you can't assume that your blood pressure is normal if you haven't had it tested. One in four people in the UK have high blood pressure and many of those don't realise they have it.