



Nutrition and Aging Resource Center

Sodium Reduction Resources

A Resource Sheet to Benefit the Aging Network

Sodium is a necessary nutrient, but in excess, it can have a negative impact on our health. Meals funded by the Older Americans Act Title III-C Senior Nutrition Program must meet the Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs) according to regulations, policies, and procedures set by state units on aging. The DRI for sodium is $\leq 2,300$ mg per day.

To support local service providers in serving healthy, delicious meals, the [Nutrition and Aging Resource Center](#) has resources available on topics ranging from using fresh produce to contracting tips, menu development, and more.

Resources from the Nutrition and Aging Resource Center

- [Tips for Reducing Sodium](#) – Reduce sodium without reducing the flavor.
- [Creating Delicious, Healthy, Appealing Meals for Seniors](#) – Incorporating food and nutrition trends.
- [Contracting Tips for Purchasing Meals/Food](#) – Outlines the recommended process for sourcing meals.
- [Nourishing Seniors Through Medically Tailored Meals](#) – Opportunities and examples of providing medically tailored meals.
- [Partnerships with Food Banks and Other United States Department of Agriculture Programs](#) – Frequently asked questions on how Older Americans Act programs can partner with SNAP, TEFAP, food banks, SFMNP, etc.

Senior nutrition programs are not alone in the challenge to control the sodium content of meals. Since about 2012, schools participating in the National School Lunch Program have been in a multi-year gradual sodium reduction effort.

Resources from the Institute for Child Nutrition

The Institute for Child Nutrition (ICN) [“Shaking It Up: Small Changes Lead to Big Flavors”](#) webpage includes resources on strategies for supply chain management, purchasing,

cooking approaches and menu planning. Below are select resources that can be helpful to local service providers.

- [Scoping Out the Sodium in School Menus](#): Tips to identify sources of sodium in the menu and menu strategies to control sodium content of meals.
- [Working With Your Procurement Partners](#): Tips to prepare for working with partners and tips for setting purchasing strategies to reduce sodium.
- [Writing Specifications That Limit Sodium](#): Tips and examples for writing food specifications that control sodium levels.
- [Sodium Swaps: Utilizing Product Substitutions](#): Simple strategies for replacing high sodium products with lower sodium options.
- Flavor Boosting Culinary Techniques – five-to-seven-minute videos for enhancing flavor without adding sodium:
 - [Balance with Culinary Acids](#)
 - [Brighten Up Lunch with Fresh Herbs](#)
 - [Spice Up Your Lunch](#) (using spices, including how to “bloom” spices)
 - [Spice Blends that Shake Up School Lunches](#)
- [Culinary Institute of Child Nutrition Flavor Enhancement Page](#): Training tools including infographics and videos on low sodium, high flavor cooking methods.
- [The ICN Child Nutrition Recipe Box Standardized Recipes](#): Standardized recipes that are applicable to an older adult population.

Additional Resources

- [Making the Move to DASH \(Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension\)](#) – Tips from NIH to make DASH work for you.
- [Homegrown Taste Test Guide](#): Simple guide to help you plan and structure taste tests.