

Low Salt Diet for Diabetic Nephropathy

Patients must contact their dietitians for any questions regarding the incorporation of information obtained from this guideline into their diets.

Salt helps to regulate the body's fluid balance, but a high salt intake can cause the body to retain water that can lead to high blood pressure. A high blood pressure is unhealthy and can cause damage to the kidney, heart, brain and eyes.

Guidelines for a Low Salt Diet

1. Do not add salt to food during the cooking process except for when it is indicated by the dietitian, and do not add extra salt to food at the table. Rather use alternative flavourings that do not contain salt, e.g. herbs, pepper, curry, vinegar, onions, peppers, garlic, ginger, rosemary and lemon juice.
2. Avoid salt-containing flavouring agents such as Aromat, Fondor, onion salt, celery salt, garlic salt, vegetable salt, barbeque and chicken spices, meat tenderisers, commercial sauces, soups, gravies, and stock cubes.
3. Potassium containing salt replacements (e.g. No-salt, Low salt or other salt substitutes) should not be used as a replacement since too much potassium can be life threatening to a patient with kidney failure.
4. Check the food labels for forbidden ingredients e.g. salt, sodium, monosodium glutamate (MSG), or any sodium-containing additive.
5. Foods with a **high salt content** should be restricted as indicated by dietitian:
 - Processed foods like Vienna's, cold meats, ham, hamburger patties or bully beef, beef- and pork sausages

Rather use unprocessed chicken, meat or fish, meatballs or other lean mince dishes, ostrich or venison

- Canned fish, dried fish ('bokkoms') and smoked fish

Rather use fresh or frozen fish products

- Salty spreads like meat and vegetable extracts, fish paste, liver spread, pâté, cheese- or meat spread

Rather use spreads like different types of artificially sweetened jams and low fat cottage cheese

- Cheeses with a high salt content like Blaauwkrantz, Roquefort, Parmesan and Feta

Rather use Cheddar, Gouda, Mozzarella, Ricotta or Brie in small amounts

- Salty snacks like chips, salty biscuits, biltong, dried sausage, salted nuts, salted popcorn, olives or pickles

Rather use provitas or whole wheat crackers, unsalted nuts, seeds and popcorn

General guidelines

1. Take your blood pressure tablets regularly as prescribed by your doctor.
2. If overweight, reduce weight by following a well-balanced weight loss program.
3. Seek advice from your doctor regarding an appropriate exercise program.

