Sodium in Drinking Water

Approximate Sodium Content of Foods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Item</th>
<th>mg of sodium per serving</th>
<th>Food Item</th>
<th>mg of sodium per serving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Processed cheese</td>
<td>406 mg</td>
<td>Stuffing mix</td>
<td>1131 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canned ham</td>
<td>1114 mg</td>
<td>Green olives</td>
<td>323 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corned beef</td>
<td>802 mg</td>
<td>Dill pickle</td>
<td>928 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sauerkraut</td>
<td>1554 mg</td>
<td>Fast food hamburger</td>
<td>461 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomato juice</td>
<td>878 mg</td>
<td>Canned chicken noodle soup</td>
<td>1107 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheaties</td>
<td>355 mg</td>
<td>Soy sauce</td>
<td>1029 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canned beef stew</td>
<td>980 mg</td>
<td>Table salt</td>
<td>1938 mg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sodium and Your Health

- Sodium is naturally found in groundwater due to its ability to dissolve.
- Sodium concentrations in groundwaters normally range between 6 and 130 mg/L.
- Most water supplies contain less than 20 mg of sodium per litre.
- In southwestern Ontario, levels of sodium in drinking water may be higher due to the area’s underground salt deposits.
- Human activities can also contribute to sodium levels in water.
- An estimated 25% to 50% of salt used on roads for snow and ice control enters groundwater and can lead to high levels of sodium in public water supplies.
- Water softeners can produce levels over 300 mg/L.
- Other factors influencing sodium levels in water include agricultural run-off, sewage and industrial waste, sodium compounds in corrosion control and water treatment chemicals such as sodium fluoride, sodium bicarbonate and sodium hypochlorite.

Regulating Sodium in Our Drinking Water

- In Ontario, sodium is required to be sampled in municipally treated drinking water every five years.
- All sodium levels in excess of 20 mg/L must be reported to the Medical Officer of Health.
- The Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit (HNHU) periodically notifies local physicians of elevated sodium levels in our municipal drinking water in order for them to advise their patients with sodium-restricted diets.
- For those on private wells, water samples can be submitted to private labs for sodium level testing for a fee. Contact the HNHU for help finding an accredited lab near you.
- Tests for sodium are also done by water conditioning companies listed in the phonebook or online.

Sodium-Restricted Diets

- People suffering from hypertension or congestive heart failure or those on a sodium-restricted diet must take certain precautions to regulate their sodium intake.
- Consulting your doctor and/or a registered dietitian for planning of food choices is one way to regulate your sodium diet.
- Precautionary steps should also include awareness of sodium levels in drinking water.

Treatment for Sodium in Drinking Water

- Boiling water does not remove sodium and will only increase concentrations.
- Water treatment devices may also be installed at the kitchen tap to help remove sodium (e.g. reverse osmosis units).