# 3 Gram Sodium Diet

A 3 gram sodium diet restricts the amount of sodium in the diet to no more than 3 grams or 3000 milligrams (mg) daily. Limiting the amount of sodium is often used to help lower blood pressure, and is important for heart failure, liver and kidney problems. Many foods contain sodium for flavor and sometimes as a preservative. So when the amount of sodium in a diet needs to be low, it's important to know what to look for when choosing foods and drinks. It may take some time to get used to making some dietary changes. The following includes some information and guidelines to help make it easier for you to adapt to a lower sodium diet.

## QUICK TIPS

- Do not add salt to food.
- Look for products with no more than 600 mg/meal.
- Avoid convenience items and fast food which are often high in sodium.
- Choose unsalted snack foods.
- Buy lower sodium products often labeled as “lower sodium” or “no salt added”.
- Check food labels to learn how much sodium is in one serving.
- When eating at a restaurant, ask that your food be prepared with less salt, or none if possible.

## READING FOOD LABELS FOR SODIUM INFORMATION

- The Nutrition Facts panel is a good place to find how much sodium is in foods.
- Look for products with no more than 600 mg sodium in one serving.
- Remember that 3 g = 3000 mg.
- The food label may also list foods as:
  - **Sodium-free:** Less than five mg in a serving.
  - **Very low sodium:** 35 mg or less in a serving.
  - **Low-sodium:** 140 mg or less in a serving.
  - **Light in sodium:** 50 percent less sodium in a serving. For example, if a food that usually has 300 mg of sodium is changed to become light in sodium, it will have 150 mg of sodium.
  - **Lightly salted:** 50 percent less sodium added to a food. For example, a food that usually has 500 mg of sodium added would have only 250 mg of sodium added.
  - **Reduced sodium:** 25 percent less sodium in a serving. For example, if a food that usually has 400 mg of sodium is changed to reduced sodium, it will have 300 mg of sodium.

## CHOOSING FOODS

| AVOID | CHOOSE |
|---|---|
| **Grains:**<br>Salted crackers and snack items<br>Some cereals, including instant hot cereals<br>Bread stuffing and biscuit mixes.<br>Seasoned rice or pasta mixes | **Grains:**<br>Unsalted snack items<br>Low sodium cereals, oats, puffed wheat and rice, shredded wheat<br>English muffins and bread<br>Pasta |
| **Meats:**<br>Salted, canned, smoked, spiced, pickled meats including fish and poultry.<br>Bacon, ham, sausage, cold cuts, hot dogs, anchovies. | **Meats:**<br>Low sodium canned tuna and salmon.<br>Fresh or frozen meat, poultry and fish. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Dairy:**<br>Processed cheese and spreads<br>Cottage cheese<br>Buttermilk and condensed milk<br>Regular cheese | **Dairy:**<br>Milk<br>Low sodium cottage cheese<br>Yogurt<br>Sour cream<br>Low sodium cheese |
| **Fruits and Vegetables:**<br>Regular canned vegetables<br>Regular canned tomato sauce and paste<br>Frozen vegetables in sauces<br>Olives<br>Pickles<br>Relishes<br>Sauerkraut | **Fruits and Vegetables:**<br>Low sodium canned vegetables<br>Low sodium tomato sauce and paste<br>Frozen or fresh vegetables<br>Fresh and frozen fruit |
| **Condiments:**<br>Canned and packaged gravies<br>Worcestershire sauce<br>Tartar sauce<br>Barbecue sauce<br>Soy sauce<br>Steak sauce<br>Ketchup<br>Onion, garlic and table salt<br>Meat flavorings and tenderizers | **Condiments:**<br>Fresh and dried herbs and spices.<br>Low sodium varieties of mustard and ketchup.<br>Lemon juice<br>Tabasco sauce<br>Horseradish |

*Information from www.eatright.org, Foodwise Nutritional Analysis Database.*

Document Released: 12/18/2006 Document Re-Released: 03/14/2011
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.