



Sodium can turn up in surprising places

I noticed that the canned chickpeas I buy to use in my salads say “brine” on the ingredients listing. Would this type have more salt than other varieties? Also, my husband likes pickles with his lunch. Do they contain too much sodium to have on a daily basis?

Good for you for paying attention to the sodium in your diet. Most Americans consume much more sodium than they need. The recommendation is to limit sodium to about 2,300 milligrams a day — the amount in a teaspoon of sodium chloride (also known as table salt). But sodium is part and parcel of so many foods, it's difficult to achieve that goal.

Reducing sodium intake could be a life-saving step, especially for at-risk groups including people over 50, African-Americans, or anyone with high blood pressure or diabetes. According to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, people who consume less than 1,500 milligrams of sodium per day have better blood pressure than those who consume more. Since nearly one-third of American adults have high blood pressure, reducing salt and sodium intake could have broad impact.

For your chickpeas, it may be a good idea to look for a variety with

no salt added. Brine is water that's nearly saturated with salt. Check the Nutrition Facts label — sodium is always listed and you can get an idea of how much you're consuming. You can also reduce sodium content by rinsing the beans before eating them.

As for the pickles, again, it's good that you're being cautious. One large dill pickle can have up to 1,700 milligrams of sodium. Again — look at the label and determine just how much sodium is in a typical serving. If your husband doesn't want to cut back on pickles, he should make sure the rest of his diet is lower in sodium.

To do, cut back on canned, processed and frozen foods, which tend to be high in sodium. That includes canned soups, hot dogs, pizza, olives, frozen meals, ham and bacon and virtually all Chinese food. You'll also find lots of sodium in cheese, canned tuna and tomato juice. Also check the labels on flavored rice or pasta dishes as well as instant and ready-to-eat breakfast cereals. You might be surprised how quickly the sodium in your diet adds up.

Instead, focus meals on fresh poultry, fish and lean meats instead of processed types, and choose fresh, plain frozen or canned “no salt added” vegetables. In cooking and at the table, use herbs, spices and salt-free seasoning blends instead of salt.

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

**For the week of
Dec. 13, 2009**

By Martha Filipic

614-292-9833

filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu

Editor:

This column was reviewed by Julie Shertzer, registered dietitian and program specialist for Ohio State University Extension in the Department of Human Nutrition, in the College of Education and Human Ecology.

**Section of Communications
and Technology
News and Media Relations**
2021 Coffey Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1044
614-292-2011

208 Research Services
Building
1680 Madison Ave.
Wooster, OH 44691-4096
330-263-3780

Ohio State University Extension embraces human diversity and is committed to ensuring that all research and related educational programs are available to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or veteran status. This statement is in accordance with United States Civil Rights Laws and the USDA. *Keith L. Smith, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Agricultural Administration and Director, Ohio State University Extension*
TDD No. 800-589-8292 (Ohio only) or 614-292-1868