

NutriGet

Use Nutrition Labels to Become Sodium Savvy

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Hypertension is a common chronic disease in Hong Kong. The local prevalence of diagnosed hypertension increased from 9.3% in 2008 to 11.0% in 2011/12. A key to reducing the risk of hypertension is lowering dietary sodium intake. The World Health Organization recommends no more than 2 000mg of sodium per day for adults to lower blood pressure which in turn help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke and coronary heart disease. The “Three-steps Guide to Use Nutrition Labels” below shows you how to keep your sodium intake.

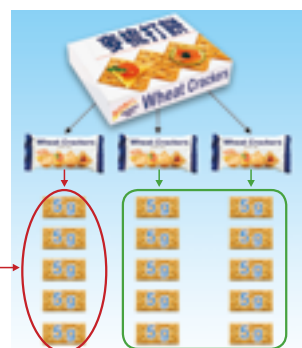
Step 1: Read Nutrition Label – expose the sodium hidden in food

To most people sodium is more commonly thought of as salt, while some will associate it with salty foods such as processed meat or condiments/sauces. In fact, sodium can be found in all these and more. Sodium naturally occurs in food and may lurk in all kinds of unexpected foods in the form of food additives. Many foods – like bread, biscuits and cereals – contain sodium but don’t taste salty, some of them are even high in sodium. Consumers can check the nutrition label to see how much sodium is in food. Take biscuit as example, the amount of sodium listed on nutrition labels is usually based on per 100 g or per serving.

Nutrition label of biscuit A

營養資料 Nutrition Information	
每包裝含食用分量數目=3 No. of Servings per package=3	
食用分量 Serving size: 25 克 (5 塊 pieces) 每實用分量 Per serving	
能量/Energy	117 千卡/kcal
蛋白質/Protein	2 克/g
總脂肪/Total fat	4.5 克/g
- 飽和脂肪/Saturated fat	4 克/g
- 反式脂肪/Trans fat	0 克/g
碳水化合物/Carbohydrates	17 克/g
- 糖/Sugars	2 克/g
鈉/Sodium	300 毫克/mg

A package of biscuit A contains 3 servings. The serving size is 5 pieces and the sodium amount is 300 mg, which means that a person will normally eat 5 pieces of biscuit A at one time and consume 300 mg of sodium.



5 pieces (1 serving) contain 300mg of sodium

10 pieces (2 servings) contain 600mg of sodium

Step 2: Know How Much I Eat – the amount you eat is proportional to your sodium intake

The more you eat, the more nutrients including sodium are consumed. For instance, if you eat twice the amount listed in the serving size, i.e. 10 pieces of biscuit A, you will get 300mg x 2 = 600mg of sodium.

Step 3: Make Better Choices – compare nutrition labels

Eating 10 pieces of biscuit A will meet 30% of the daily limit of sodium for adults (2000mg)(600mg/2000mg x 100% = 30%). Compare food products to make a better choice. Be sure to check for the sodium content on the nutrition labels and choose the one with less sodium. When comparing products, make sure they have the same food reference amount, i.e. both are based on per 100g. For food products with different reference amounts, you need to compare their sodium contents basing on the same amount of food by doing some calculations.

For foods basing on different reference amounts, do some calculations before making comparison. Reference amount of biscuit B (100g) is four times that of biscuit A (25g). If reference amount of biscuit A is converted to 100 g which is same as that of biscuit B, its sodium content will increase 4-fold to 1200 mg. Based on the same reference amount of food, sodium content of biscuit A is more than twice higher than biscuit B.

Biscuit A

營養資料 Nutrition Information	
每包裝含食用分量數目=3 No. of Servings per package=3	
食用分量 Serving size: 25 克 (5 塊 pieces) 每實用分量 Per serving	
鈉/Sodium	300 毫克/mg

Biscuit B

營養資料 Nutrition Information	
鈉/Sodium	500 毫克/mg

Biscuit C

營養資料 Nutrition Information	
鈉/Sodium	700 毫克/mg

For foods basing on the same reference amount, compare their sodium content directly. Biscuit B contains less sodium (500mg) than biscuit C (700mg).

Identify high or low sodium food at a glance

In Hong Kong, prepackaged food with “low sodium” claim must contain no more than 120mg of sodium per 100g of food, which is in line with Codex definition. Although Codex has not defined a specific level for high sodium food, in some countries such as the United Kingdom, foods with high sodium may refer to those with over 600mg of sodium per 100g of food. The following table (based on 100g of food) serves as a quick reference to give you a rough idea about the level of sodium in a prepackaged food product.

