

MMWR Highlights

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Most Americans consume more than double their recommended daily limit of sodium

A new study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that more than two out of three adults should consume no more than 1,500 milligrams (mg) per day of sodium to lower their risk for high blood pressure. The study in CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* used data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), a survey designed to assess the health and nutritional status of adults and children in the United States.

A diet high in sodium increases the risk of having higher blood pressure. High blood pressure increases the risk for heart disease and stroke, leading causes of death in the United States.

Actual daily salt intake much greater than recommended levels

- The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that in general adults should consume less than 2,300 mg per day of sodium.
- But, specific population groups, including persons with high blood

pressure, blacks, or middle-aged and older adults, should consume no more than 1,500 mg per day of sodium. The recommendation of no more than 1,500 mg per day applies to 69.2% of the U.S. adult population.

- The overall percentage of persons who fall within this specific population group increased significantly in each NHANES study period (see figure):
 - 64.4% in 1999-2000
 - 67.4% in 2001-2002
 - 68.9% in 2003-2004
 - 69.2% in 2005-2006
- In 2005–2006, an estimated 29% of U.S. adults had high blood pressure and an additional 28% had pre-hypertension or borderline high blood pressure.

- In 2005–2006, the estimated average intake of sodium for persons ages 2 years and older was 3,436 mg per day. Daily consumption in 2001-2002 was 3,329 mg per day.

Too much salt in our foods

- About 75% of sodium comes from packaged, processed and restaurant foods.
- Individuals who reduce the amount of sodium they eat and drink can lower their blood pressure and reduce their risk for developing serious health problems.
- People should read nutrition labels, choose foods lower in sodium, and eat more fresh fruits and vegetables.

Figure. Percentage of U.S. population in high-risk groups that should consume no more than 1,500 mg of sodium per day

