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Use the **editorial address** when writing about the newsletter—see the panel on page 4.

## Often Feel Bloating? One Food Ingredient May Be To Blame

**If you often feel bloated after a meal, don't be too quick to blame high-fibre foods. The real culprit might surprise you.**

Your gut may be rebelling because you're eating too much salt, a new study suggests.

"Sodium reduction is an important dietary intervention to reduce bloating symptoms and could be used to enhance compliance with healthy high-fibre diets," said study researcher Noel Mueller, an Assistant Professor (AP) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, USA.

AP Mueller and his research colleagues looked at data from a large clinical trial conducted in the late 1990s known as Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension-Sodium, or DASH-Sodium for short.

**The Conclusion: Consuming a lot of salt increases bloating, as does a healthy, high-fibre diet.**

Although it's not clear exactly how salt contributes, AP Mueller suspects fluid retention may be the key. Eating more salt can promote water retention and make digestion less efficient, which can lead to gas and bloating, he said.

Studies in mice have shown that dietary salt can alter the makeup of gut bacteria. And that, in turn, can affect gas production in the colon, AP Mueller said.

"Our latest study suggests that selecting foods with lower sodium content, such as those that are not ultra-processed, may help relieve bloating in some people," he said.



Bloating affects as many as a third of Americans, including more than 90% of those with irritable bowel syndrome. It's a painful build-up of excess gas created as gut bacteria break down fibre during digestion.

For the latest study, the researchers used findings from a 1998-1999 trial. In that trial, the DASH diet - one low in fat and high in fibre, fruits, nuts and vegetables - was compared with a low-fibre eating regimen. The trial's goal was to learn how salt and other factors affected high blood pressure.

## Often Feel Bloating? One Food Ingredient May Be To Blame ~ Continued:

The latest review found that about 41% on a high-fibre diet reported bloating and men had a bigger problem with it than women. And diets high in salt increased the odds of bloating by 27%.

"We found that in both diets, reducing sodium intake reduced bloating symptoms," AP Mueller said.

The upshot is that reducing sodium can be an effective way to prevent gas - and may help people maintain a healthy, high-fibre eating regimen.

### Skip the Salt

The review was published in the American Journal of Gastroenterology.

Source: Steven Reinberg, HealthDay Reporter  
[www.healthday.com](http://www.healthday.com)

**Editor's Note: Many things can cause bloating - lactose intolerance, celiac disease, small intestinal bacterial overgrowth, infection, medications, certain foods or many other conditions.**

**If readers are experiencing gastrointestinal symptoms such as bloating on an ongoing basis, they should see their GP or doctor as a priority.**

### Eating Less Salt

To eat less salt, try following these steps:

- Fresh food should make up most of the everyday diet – base your meals around core foods rather than packaged foods.
- Choose no added salt (NAS), salt reduced or low salt foods when shopping:
  - Look for processed foods with NAS or less 'sodium' indicated on the nutrition information panel (NIP) – see the food labelling information on packaging for further information.

- Use cold roast meat or poultry for salads instead of processed meats like ham.
- Add garlic, vinegar, lemon and limes, fresh herbs and unprocessed spices to food in place of salt

## Can I Lower My Blood Pressure By Following A Healthy Eating Plan?

Following a healthy eating plan *may* have a positive effect on lowering high blood pressure.

***It is important to see your doctor to have your blood pressure monitored before you make any important dietary or lifestyle changes.***

Try the following tips:

- Reduce your weight, *if overweight*:
  - If you are overweight, losing 5-10% of your current body weight can improve your blood pressure.
- Be physically active:
  - The recommended level of physical activity is 30 minutes, 5 times a week (i.e. 150 minutes per week). This can also be accumulated in smaller bouts of 10 minutes at a time.
- Minimise alcohol intake:
  - Alcohol can raise your blood pressure.
- Reduce the amount of salt you consume:
  - High salt intake is linked to high blood pressure. Only a small portion of the salt we eat comes from salt added to food after cooking. Most salt is found in processed foods. It is recommended people with high blood pressure follow a NAS/low salt eating plan.
  - Aim to eat only whole or natural foods e.g. home-made meals with NAS.
- Consume adequate low fat dairy products, fresh fruits and vegetables:
  - Recent research indicates that eating low fat dairy products and at least two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables a day can help to reduce your blood pressure.

Source: Dietitians Association of Australia

## **Australia's first salt reform guide for food manufacturers has been launched to help reduce the high salt intake in Australian diets**

**A recent consumer study found 47% of people surveyed were very concerned about the amount of salt / sodium in food and a whopping 90% knew that salt was bad for their health.**

### **Reformation Readiness:**

A best practice guide to salt reduction for Australian food manufacturers supports reduction of salt (sodium) in processed and packaged products. The reform guides manufacturers through the reformulation process with information on checking nutritional composition, completing competitor benchmarking, establishing salt targets and timeframes, product improvement and testing.

Leading nutritionist, reformulation expert and guide author, Vanessa Clarkson, said this new reform guide is particularly useful for small-to-medium food manufacturers.

"The food industry is constantly evolving to meet consumer demand, which increasingly is calling out for healthier choices," Ms Clarkson said.

"Food manufacturers looking to reduce salt in their products will find this guide a useful starting point for their reformulation journey. By working collectively and over time to reduce salt in the food supply, consumers' palates will adapt to lower amounts and together we can have a big impact on public health."

Heart Foundation Victoria CEO Kellie-Ann Jolly welcomed the guide as timely with the Federal Government's work to develop voluntary salt reformulation targets nearing finalisation.

"The Reformulation Readiness guide provides a handy roadmap for Australia's food manufacturers to embark on their salt reformulation journey. We urge the Government to announce voluntary salt targets in the near future," Ms Jolly said.

## **Become a Salt Skipper**

"Excess salt consumption can lead to high blood pressure, yet Australians are consuming nearly double the recommended daily salt intake of less than a teaspoon. One in three Australians suffer high blood pressure, which puts them at risk for heart attack, stroke and kidney disease.

"The biggest contributor of salt in our diets is through processed and packaged foods, so it's easy for people to consume too much salt without realising it," added Ms Jolly.

"The responsibility doesn't just rest with the food industry alone, we need to work together – government, food manufacturers, public health bodies – to reduce salt in our food supply," says a spokesperson from the reform instigator, the Victorian Salt Reduction Partnership.

### **About the Victorian Salt Reduction Partnership:**

The Victorian Salt Reduction Partnership was established in 2014 in response to alarming high levels of salt consumption by the Victorian public. The partnership comprises of peak public health organisations: VicHealth, Heart Foundation, The George Institute for Global Health, Deakin University Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition, National Stroke Foundation, Kidney Health Australia, The Victorian Department for Health and Human Services, Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute, Food Innovation Australia Ltd, CSIRO and the High Blood Pressure Research Council of Australia.

Australia is committed to meeting the World Health Organisation's target of 30% reduction in average population salt intake by 2025. To achieve this, the partnership has developed a comprehensive set of actions aimed at gaining consensus and commitment for salt reduction action from governments, public and industry in Victoria.

### **Salt Skip News**

**We are always looking for lifestyle tips and salt-free or low sodium recipes to pass onto readers... Please email to: [Malcolm.Riley@csiro.au](mailto:Malcolm.Riley@csiro.au).**

**SALT SKIP NEWS**  
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Page 4 of 4

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# Cream of Celery Soup



Left over celery? Here's a recipe that can be used all year round and tastes great. No celery? Try carrots instead, or leek and potatoes, spinach even – the recipe can be easily adapted to suit lots of other vegetables. Add some fire-power with a chilli or a dash of ginger.

## Ingredients:

- 1 tbs. olive oil
- 1 brown onion, diced
- 1/2 bunch celery, chopped
- 2 small potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 2 cloves garlic or 1 heaped tsp. crushed garlic
- 1 1/2 litres liquid chicken stock (Campbell's Free Range No Added Salt) and 1/2 cup water (if needed)
- 3/4 cup thickened cream
- Flat leaf parsley, chopped roughly. Reserve some parsley to decorate
- Black pepper, to taste

## Method:

1. In a large pot or frypan, heat oil and fry onion and garlic until onion starts to soften.
2. Add celery and potatoes, fry on low heat for approx. 5 minutes.
3. Add chicken stock (and water if needed).
4. Season with pepper and turn up the heat and bring to the boil.
5. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 30 minutes or until celery and potatoes are cooked.
6. Blend with a stick blender (or use a potato masher). Add cream and parsley and stir well. Return to simmer.
7. Serve, decorated with reserved parsley and *enjoy*.

**At Salt Skip News, we are always interested to hear from readers. Please send us your Salt Skip news, tips and salt-free or low sodium recipes... please email to Malcolm.Riley@csiro.au**

**BP Monitor with Salt Skip News** is published every 2 months, from February to December (6 issues a year). This newsletter is not a substitute for health and medical advice. Readers should always seek the advice of a qualified health professional regarding their health or a medical condition.

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