

## 10 Serious Harms of Salt and the Top 4 Low Sodium Recipes for a Healthy Lifestyle

Deblina Biswas [Health](#)

A good balance of salt and sweet can add a [distinctive flavor to any dish](#). An imbalance of any one of the two can make a dish low on taste and frightfully low on satiety levels as well. But is too much of salt good for our health? Can we just liberally sprinkle salt on our food without caring too much about our health? It is only recently that table salt has gotten a bad rep. Doctors have been crying themselves hoarse about how you should keep a tight rein over your [sodium intake per day](#). Recent research has confirmed that too much salt consumption can have detrimental effects on the body.

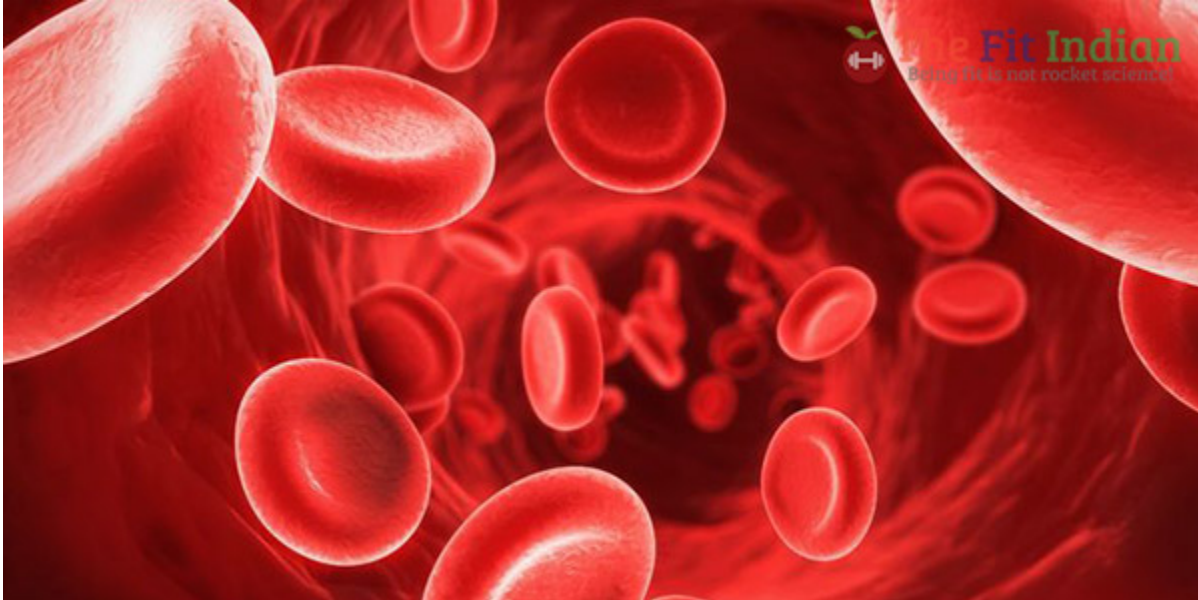


### Harmful Effect of Common Salt

Many people are already aware of the fact that eating copious amounts of [salt can elevate their blood pressure](#). But not everyone can gauge the serious consequences that uncontrolled high BP can have on their health. It can wreak havoc on their arteries, causing them to harden and become narrow, increasing the risk of getting affected by heart disease. The [effects of salt on the body](#) are not restricted to heart disease alone. Fresh research has also interlinked obesity to high sodium intake, while there is another study which substantiated that obese and overweight men with the highest salt intakes were 61 percent more likely to die of heart disease than those who were overly cautious and steer clear of consuming too much of this mineral.

- **Blood pressure**- What is blood pressure? Hypertension or blood pressure is the amount of pressure that blood ends up putting on your blood vessel walls as it gets circulated around the

body. There are certain factors such as obesity, lack of exercise and, most importantly, a high salt diet which can spike up your blood pressure, causing heart disease. About a third of adults have hypertension, and many don't realize it, as it hardly has any symptoms. Before you know it, your blood sugar levels can spiral out of control. Making simple lifestyle changes like reducing your high salt intake can bring about a positive change.



- **Stroke-** You get hit by a stroke when the blood supply to your brain is suddenly cut off, since cells die a sudden death. Stroke is one of the leading cause of adult disability and death in older people. [High blood pressure is one of the most important risk factors](#) which leads to stroke. So following a low salt menu makes a lot of sense.
- **Stomach cancer-** High intake of salt can lead to inflammation, and when the inflammation spirals out of control, it leads to a stomach ulcer or stomach cancer. The bacterium *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*) is one of the major causes of stomach cancer. Salt affects the lining of the stomach and it becomes more prone to the attacks of this bacteria. Hidden salt content in packaged foods is definitely one of the main reasons why we are finding it difficult to curb our sodium intake per day. Since most of us don't pay enough attention to reading labels, we pay the price. Next time you make a purchase of packaged food stuff at the supermarket, make sure you read the labels with a great deal of more care than you otherwise do.
- **Osteoporosis-** Every day we read about various foodstuffs and how they help keep our bone health in good shape and protect them from going brittle. Brittle bones or bones which are more prone to breakage can be a result of a disease called osteoporosis. It is a debilitating disorder affecting more women than men. Are you wondering how the intake of sodium is linked to this degenerative bone disease? Calcium is stored in bones, and a high salt diet leaches away the calcium from your bones, making them weak and brittle, susceptible to breakage. Older people are more prone to this disease. But it can affect the young too, largely due to the diet and lifestyle they follow. However, it is preventable if you maintain a healthy lifestyle, stay away from junk/processed food and do weight-bearing exercises.
- **Obesity-** Too much of salt can make you thirsty and invariably [reach out for sugary drinks](#), which will make you end up piling on those kilos. Teenagers and children are more prone to these conditions as they are addicted to easily available processed foods and sugary drinks. Obesity is the leading cause of most chronic diseases today such as diabetes, hypertension, and even cancer.



- **Kidney Stones and Kidney Disease-** A diet high on salt can cause you to excrete too much of calcium into your urine by the kidneys, leading to accumulation of calcium which in turn leads to kidney stones. They are indeed painful and in the worst circumstances can even lead to kidney disease. The detrimental health effects of salt or too much salt can disrupt the working of the kidneys, leading to kidney disease. So if you are suffering from kidney disease, make sure you keep a strict tab on your salt intake.



- **Water Retention-** If you are suffering from bloating or water retention, it is the time you reduce your salt intake. If you are on a high salt diet, chances are you may retain up to 1.5 liters of water.
- **Asthma-** A high salt diet can exacerbate the conditions of asthma. If you are reeling under the effects of asthma, make sure you reduce your salt intake and you will definitely feel immediate benefits. Of course, you need to use this in conjunction with other treatments.



- **Meniere's disease-** Meniere's is a rare disease which affects the ear and results in conditions like giddiness along with nausea and vomiting, hearing loss and tinnitus. A high salt diet can make the conditions even worse as it results in fluid retention, which can increase the pressure in the inner ear. The symptoms of Meniere's disease can be controlled if the salt intake is substantially reduced.
- **Diabetes-** Diabetes is slowly emerging to be a silent killer and the surprising fact is that salt can increase the chance of developing diabetes by elevating blood pressure levels. If you [keep blood pressure within a healthy range](#) it will mitigate the risks associated with the disease and also reduce the long-term complications of diabetes.

## Low Sodium Recipes

The daily dose of sodium required for a person is as little as one teaspoon of sodium chloride. We tend to overstep more than the recommended amount since we are hooked on to fast food and restaurant food. So you need to know about a few healthy low sodium recipes which will surely keep your blood pressure levels under check.

### 1. Cauliflower Rice

Check out this protein-rich vegetarian dish, which is pretty low on sodium, but thankfully high on taste. This should be part of your new **low salt recipes** list for sure.



## Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp safflower or olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, chopped
- 1 carrot, peeled and diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp. garam masala
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- 1/2 tsp. ground turmeric
- 1 tsp. dried mint
- 2 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 cups chopped cauliflower florets
- 1 cup quick-cooking brown rice
- 1/4 cup dried unsweetened currants or small raisins
- 1 cup frozen peas, thawed
- 1 cup lentils, drained and rinsed well
- 3 Tbsp chopped fresh cilantro or parsley
- 1/3 cup sliced unsalted almonds, toasted
- 1/2 cup low-fat plain yogurt, optional

### Method

1. In a large shallow saucepan, heat oil on medium-high. Lightly cook the onion, carrot, garlic, garam masala, coriander, mint, and turmeric; until onion softens, stirring occasionally for about 2 minutes.
2. Add cauliflower, rice, broth, and currants; cover and simmer for 7 minutes. Stir in peas and lentils; cover and simmer until the liquid become absorbed, for about 4 minutes. Stir in almonds and cilantro. You can add a dollop of yogurt to further enhance the taste.

## 2. Chickpea Soup

Make this part of your meatless Monday recipes. It is hearty, savory and can help you keep warm during those unbearable winter months.



### Ingredients

- 1 onion, diced
- 1 large carrot, diced
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tbsp. fresh ginger grated
- 1 tsp. cumin
- 1 tsp. garam masala
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp. turmeric
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 1/4 cups cooked chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1 15oz. can fire-roasted tomatoes
- 1 Tbsp. pickled jalapeños
- 1/2 cup brown basmati rice
- 1 15oz. can full-fat coconut milk
- chopped cilantro, for garnish (optional)

### Method

1. Take a large pot, add onion, carrot, celery and a splash of vegetable broth (or water) and sauté for about 5 minutes (add a little amount of water or broth if it gets too dry).
2. Add the masalas including garlic, ginger, cumin, garam masala, garlic powder, and turmeric and cook for a minute or so.
3. Pour in the broth, chickpeas, tomatoes, and jalapeños, reduce the heat, cover, and simmer for 10 minutes. Remove about 2 cups of the broth mixture and keep it aside.
4. Add the basmati rice, cover again and cook until it softens up for about 30-40 minutes.
5. While the rice cooks, add the reserved broth mixture to a blender and process until smooth. When the rice is tender, add back to the soup the 2 cups of blended broth. Stir in the coconut milk and gently reheat the soup. Pour into serving bowls and garnish with cilantro, if desired.

## 3. Barley and Avocado Salad

This is a super nutritious recipe, combining the benefits of vitamins and minerals and fiber. If you are [suffering from blood pressure](#) problems or any other health disorder, this recipe should serve your purpose to the T.



## Ingredients

- 1 cup carrot juice
- 1/2 teaspoon thyme
- Salt to taste
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne
- 1/2 cup quick-cooking barley
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 can (19 ounces) black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup fresh diced tomatoes
- 1/2 cup diced avocado

## Method

1. Blend the carrot juice, thyme, salt, and cayenne in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat, add barley, and reduce to a simmer. Cover and cook until the barley turns tender, about 15 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, whisk together lemon juice and oil in large bowl. Transfer barley and any liquid remaining in the pan to bowl with lemon juice mixture; toss to coat.
3. Add beans and tomatoes and toss to combine. Add avocado and gently toss. You can either serve it at room temperature or chilled. For further enhancing the flavor, remember to remove it from the refrigerator 20 minutes prior to serving.

## 4. Switch to Himalayan Pink Salt

The table salt or common salt undergoes so much of processing that it is robbed of its most vital nutrients. Himalayan Salt contains the same 84 trace minerals and elements that are found in the human body, which makes us root for it even more. It has less sodium and since it is in the colloidal form, it is small enough for our body to absorb the nutrients easily. Many people believe that it is the purest form of salt available on earth, not only because it is unrefined, but also because about 200 million years ago, there were crystallized sea salt beds that were protected by lava.



As it was kept in this untouched, pure environment surrounded by snow and ice for so many years, the salt has been protected from adulteration. There is a myriad of benefits of this salt, so if you want to stay healthy, you need to make that all important switch from common salt to Himalayan pink salt, or maybe to the more commonly available rock salt and/or sea salt. It can mitigate some of the harmful effects of salt on the body. Turning to healthy wholesome foods and especially a [low sodium diet menu](#) should be the norm, and curtailing the over consumption of sugar and salt is taking one big step towards health and fitness. “Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food”, Hippocrates had said it so many years ago, but those golden words still stand tall, true and relevant even after so many years. It is time we retraced our steps and ate those very foods that our ancestors endorsed. Looks like they have been right all along. When it comes to food, the more natural the better!

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