

Dietary Specifications – Sodium

Sodium is one of the four dietary specifications required by the NSLP and SBP meal pattern requirements. Sodium requirements are figured on a weekly average and include all menu items and condiments. The sodium requirements are phased in over several years with Target 1 taking effect SY 2014-15. Implementation of the second and final targets is subject to USDA’s review of data on the relationship between sodium intake and human health.

Requirements:

- ✓ School Meals offered to each grade group must meet, on average over the school week, the sodium levels specified.

Sodium Targets		
Grade Group	Lunch	Breakfast
K-5	≤ 1230 mg	≤ 540 mg
6-8	≤ 1360 mg	≤ 600 mg
9-12	≤ 1420 mg	≤ 640 mg

Tips to lower sodium in School Meals:

- **Purchasing**
 - Specify maximum sodium levels on bids.
 - Purchase fresh and unprocessed foods.

- **Menu**
 - Substitute highest sodium entrées for lower sodium choice.
 - Decrease frequency high sodium entrées are served.
 - Example: serve pizza (or other higher sodium item) once a month instead of weekly
 - Decrease serving size of high sodium item
 - Example: instead of a whole slice of Texas cheese toast, serve half a slice with pasta and reduced sodium sauce.
 - Place higher sodium menu days with lower sodium menu days during a week.

- **Cooking**
 - Prepare more items from scratch.
 - Modify higher sodium items to lower sodium.
 - Example: homemade pizza with lower sodium toppings or decreasing the amount of a higher sodium topping.
 - Use herbs and spices in place of salt.
 - Use kosher or sea salt in place of table salt.
 - Utilize “No salt added” products.

OSPI CNS School Meal Programs Reference Sheets

- **Sauces and Condiments**

- Decrease sodium in teriyaki sauce by diluting with pineapple juice.
- Make ranch dressing from scratch.
- Dilute purchased ranch dressing with yogurt.
- Reduce the frequency that higher sodium condiments are offered.
Example: Ketchup is not available daily.
- Portion high sodium condiments (no self-access by students).

Resources:

- ✓ [Just the Facts – Be Salt Savvy](#) (USDA)
- ✓ [Reducing Sodium Intake](#) (NFSMI)
- ✓ [Under Pressure Strategies for Sodium Reduction in the School Environment](#)

Acronym Reference

-mg	milligram
-NFSMI	National Food Service Management Institute
-NSLP	National School Lunch Program
-OSPI CNS	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction – Child Nutrition Services
-SBP	School Breakfast Program
-USDA	United States Department of Agriculture