

# Sodium in Drinking Water

Your body needs sodium in order to maintain blood pressure, control fluid levels and for normal nerve and muscle function. Sodium is found in most foods, soft water, some mineral waters and drugs such as antacids, laxatives, aspirin, and cough medicines. Sodium chloride is another name for table salt.

The aesthetic objective for sodium in drinking water is 200 mg/L. However, when sodium levels are higher than 20 mg/L, the Medical Officer of Health informs local physicians or local residents directly, as such information is intended to help persons on sodium restricted diets control their sodium intake.

For example, if the sodium concentration is 30 mg/L, then drinking up to two litres of water per day would contribute only 60 milligrams of sodium to a person's diet. This is about 3 percent of a teaspoon of salt. For healthy adults, this sodium level in drinking water does not pose a risk. Most adults consume 4,000 to 5,000 mg. of sodium per day. Even people on very strict sodium-restricted diets have a 500 mg. per day sodium allowance, and two litres of water would only account for 12 percent of their daily allotment of sodium (see chart).

<b>Sodium-Restricted Diet Summary</b>	
	Maximum Intake of Sodium Allowed Per Day
Very Strict Diet	500 mg/day
Strict Diet	1,000 mg/day
Moderate Diet	2,000 mg/day
Mild Diet	3,000 mg/day
Note: One teaspoon of salt equals 2,000 mg of sodium.	

Remember, water-softening devices using ionic exchange replaces calcium in hard water with sodium. While this reduces the hardness of your water, it can add significant amounts of sodium at your tap. If you need a water softener, perhaps this should be restricted to water servicing your laundry facilities to help minimize soap usage, and a separate un-softened supply retained for cooking and drinking purposes.

For more information contact the Lambton Public Health at 519 383-8331 or 1-800-667-1839.

