

Life without salt can be delicious

Dear Jo:
I have high blood pressure and have been told by my doctor to decrease the amount of salt in my diet. I no longer add salt during the preparation of my food, nor do I use it as a seasoning at the table. Unfortunately, I now find my food tasteless. Salt substitutes don't help much either.
Are there any low-salt herbs or spices, that you know of, that would put pleasure back into my meals again?

gerontology
A. Jolayne Farrell

yo ever liked tomatoes with salt. Oregano is good with Italian food and ginger enhances Chinese food. Thyme perks poultry stuffing, stews, and vegetable soups.

Dear Mrs. S.:
Giving up added salt in your diet is difficult, but with some planning and practice, and the use of a few low-salt herbs and spices, your meals should taste better.

Fresh herbs and spices that are low in salt are mint, parsley, chives, dill, sage, rosemary, fennel, and tarragon. Many of these can be grown in your own garden or in pots inside your house. Mint is good in peas; parsley adds flavor to almost everything; chives are great in potatoes — and dill is marvelous in potato salad.

The dried class includes curry and chill powders, nutmeg, basil, oregano, ginger, and thyme. Curry powder can be added to any ground beef, noodle, or rice skillet dish. If you enjoy popcorn, but miss the salt, try adding ¼ teaspoon of chill powder to eight cups of popcorn. Nutmeg, when freshly grated, adds dash to mixed vegetables, carrots, spinach, and green beans. It's also good in warm milk drinks. Adding a pinch of basil to a fresh tomato will make you forget that

Sage can still be used in poultry stuffing. Fennel (the licorice flavored herb) may be used in recipes calling for celery salt. Lastly, tarragon, in vinegar, makes a tasty salad dressing.

When I was in Finland, the chef at my hotel, gave me his recipe for his favorite low-salt potatoes. He added one teaspoon each of thyme and tarragon to two cups of sliced potatoes that were fried in unsalted butter — delicious!

Lock on your salt-free diet as a challenge. Try to be imaginative, with some of those herbs and spices — and perhaps you won't miss the salt after a while.

Dear Jo:
I enjoyed your delicate handling of the elderly constipation problem. I was surprised that you "condemned" the taking of the good old-fashioned laxative, mineral oil. I have taken this reliable remedy (occasionally) for years. I would like to know why you do not approve of its use.

states that mineral oil reduces the intestinal absorption of vitamins A, D, E, and K, causing serious dietary deficiencies. It also has been found to interact with certain drugs such as anticoagulants (blood thinners) causing undesired side effects.

Even though you only take this laxative occasionally, you would be wise to avoid it altogether. Before taking anything for your constipation, you should assess your lifestyle as to exercise, water intake and fibre in your diet.

Mrs. G. Readers can write to Jolayne Farrell, PO Box 66, Postal Station G., Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

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