

# Americans consume 20 times needed amount of salt

Salt is second only to sugar as an additive in the American diet. As a consequence, medical scientists find we ingest 10 to 20 times the sodium our body needs or can eliminate. Most dietary sodium comes in the form of sodium chloride, commonly called table salt. This is 40-percent sodium and 60-percent chloride. One teaspoon of salt contains 2,000 mg (2 grams) of sodium.

A number of recent studies have indicated that over-consumption of sodium is linked to hypertension (high blood pressure) which is, in turn, cited as a major cause of heart and kidney disease, stroke and death.

Behavioral scientists tell us that our early vegetarian ancestors ate very little salt, probably less than 500 mg a day. Even today, it is agreed that physiologically we need less than 1,000 mg (1 gram) of salt in our daily diet. In spite of that we are eating as much as 25,000 mg to 35,000 mg a day. Because early man used little salt our bodies hoard sodium and excrete potassium.

This creates the problems with our bodies.

The introduction of excessive amounts of highly salted foods into the diet of our young has resulted in a population which averages five to ten teaspoons (2,000 mg per teaspoon) of salt per day in its diet, although the body needs only a fraction of that amount. The result is 50-million persons in the United States suffering from high blood pressure.

IN MANY foods salt is added by manufacturers to heighten the flavor. Bakers use salt to help control yeast actions and reduce water absorption to make better dough. Saltier crust also has a more attractive color.

Sodium is added to butter and dairy products as a preservative. When vegetables and other products are canned, the makers add large amounts of sodium. For instance, fresh garden peas contain only 3 mg of sodium per five-ounce serving, while canned peas, the same serving, contain 350 mg. Over

100 times as much.

A nutrition task force of the non-profit Consumer Education Research Center has studied this situation and compiled a book to help break the salt habit. It lists the salt content of over 800 foods, liquors and medicines. The book "Salt and Your Health" is available for \$5 (including postage) from CERC-Salt Project, P.O. Box 336, South Orange, N.J. 07079.

Even pets are given diets extremely high in salt content. The makers say that this is necessary to encourage the animals to eat the products. However, meat-eating wild animals eat no salt except that found in the other animals they eat. Thus we subject the pets we love to the same diseases that we cause in ourselves.

According to Robert L. Berko, executive director of the Center, there are many ways to season foods without salt. For instance, he says, the flavor of asparagus can be enhanced by using garlic, lemon juice, vinegar or onion. For beef, Berko suggests using bay

leaf, dry mustard powder, green peppers, marjoram, fresh mushrooms, nutmeg, onion, pepper, sage or thyme. The book lists alternate seasonings for meats, fish, poultry, vegetables and soups.

THE CONSUMER leader cautions against the excessive use of salt substitutes since they use potassium in place of sodium and can result in problems associated with too much potassium.

"For those who require more specific ways to avoid sodium, we have included low-salt recipes and sources where other recipes can be found," said Berko.

"We think we can tell what foods are salty. And many times we are right. Obviously sauerkraut, pickles, potato chips and herring are salty. But did you know that two slices of Pepperidge Farm White Bread (234 mg) contains more sodium than a one-ounce bag of Lay's Potato Chips; that 1/2 cup of cottage cheese contains as much sodium

as 32 potato chips or that 1/4 cup of Jell-O Chocolate Instant Pudding and Pie Filling (404 mg) gives you more sodium than three slices of Oscar Meyer Sugar-Cured Bacon (302 mg)!"

"Did you now that dehydrated chicken or beef noodle soup contains 1200 mg. of sodium and Parmesan cheese (grated), 338 mg. per serving. Regular whole milk contains 105 mg. per eight-ounce glass while instant whole milk delivers 470 mg. A modest serving of canned shrimp brings you a giant 1,995 mg.; chili con carne with beans (canned) 1,194 mg. per cup; stuffing mix 1,131 mg. and Kentucky Fried Chicken (3 pcs.) a whopping 2,285 mg. of sodium.

"Most adults need less than 1,000 mg. of sodium per day for their physiological well-being."

"We must be vigilant and know the sodium content of the foods we eat, and it is essential to our health that we develop a plan to reduce our salt intake," he stresses.

The Center's study suggests that we immediately cut down to half the salt we normally use in our cooking and reduce gradually from there. Don't add salt before tasting foods. Replace food high in salt with those low in salt content. Try to prepare as much of the food you eat as possible. Manufacturers use three times as much sodium in cooking as the home cook.



## Take more than appetite to parties.

After some pleasant correspondence with Patricia Scott, executive vice president of the Michigan Beef Industry Commission, I'll be one of the five judges at the statewide beef cook-off Saturday, 1-3 p.m. at Michigan State University. I look forward to meeting any of you interested enough to witness the baptism of a cook-off judge.

When I'm invited to a party, I like to bring something more than my appetite. So I often volunteer to prepare a dish such as an appetizer.

My favorite carry-over hors d'oeuvre is Swedish meatballs for several reasons.

First, I can prepare the meatballs at home with a minimum of effort. Secondly, I can let my electric slow cooker do half the work before I arrive at the party. Most importantly, the meatballs can continue cooking at the party and then stay warm in the convenient Crock-Pot.

At a recent party, where the hostess served a breadless appetizer of ham and cheese squares toothpiked with pickle, my meatballs were a hit.

There were a couple of youngsters who hung around the buffet table devouring the meatballs like they hadn't eaten in several days.

One of them did come up with an excellent suggestion.

"Why don't you put them on toothpicks," the girl said.

She helped me, then even took the tray around.

There was plenty of dancing. The guests also did their share of eating.

We almost ran out of toothpicks -- and meatballs.

- SWEDISH MEATBALLS**
- 2 1/2 cups plain bread crumbs
  - 1 1/2 cups milk
  - 2 1/2 lbs. ground beef
  - 5 eggs, slightly beaten
  - 2 onions, finely chopped
  - 2 1/2 tsp. salt
  - 1 1/2 tsp. dill weed
  - 1/4 tsp. allspice
  - 1/4 tsp. nutmeg
  - 6 tsp. margarine
  - 2 1/2 cups beef broth
  - 1/4 tsp. black pepper
  - 1 cup half and half

In large mixing bowl, soak bread crumbs in milk 5 minutes. Add ground meat, eggs, onions, 3 teaspoons salt, 1/2 teaspoon dill weed, allspice and nutmeg, mix well and refrigerate covered 1 hour. Shape meat mixture into 1-inch diameter balls and lightly brown in hot margarine in large skillet.

## Old favorites in new book

Ah, the memory of that delectable married cheesecake you savored at MacKinnon's of Northville. If only you could whip one up yourself. No problem. MacKinnon's cheesecake is included in "Fideler in the Kitchen," a cookbook put together by the National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Detroit Section.

Among the 500 tested recipes are 20 favorites from local restaurants and the files of celebrity cooks. What's more, special features abound in this special book. There are recipes using food processors and microwave ovens. There are equivalent and substitution guides as well as pages of helpful hints. Did you know, for instance, that dental floss is also great for tinning a turkey, or that you get more popcorn per cone by stirring kernels in the freezer and popping them microwave? Add for those who adore desserts, there are 70 recipes in the dessert section, 31 of them cheesecake.

Cost of "Fideler in the Kitchen" is \$9.95 per copy. Books are available at Bookstop in the Metro, 716 N. Main, Northville, Plymouth, Dearborn, 4-Forest Place, Plymouth and Plymouth Book World, 244 Plymouth, Plymouth. For other locations, call the office of the National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Detroit Section, 1450 W. 12 Ave., Southfield, 48076, 887-0664.


placing meatballs as they are browned in 4 1/2-quart electric slow cooker. Combine broth, pepper, half and half, 1/4 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon dill weed, some pan drippings and pour over meatballs. Cover and cook on low heat 4-6 hours. Yields 65 meatballs.



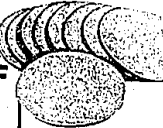
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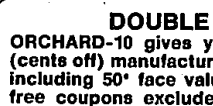


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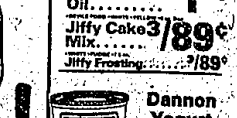
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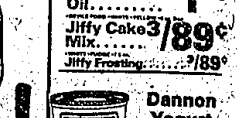
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