



Na and K amounts in some common processed foods:

1 cup Campbell's Chunky Vegetable Beef Soup

- 889 mg Na (60% DRV)
- 0 mg K

1 piece Domino's Pepperoni pizza

- 608 mg Na (41% DRV)
- 221 mg K

Stouffer's Lasagna (326 g)

- 960 mg Na (64% DRV)
- 0 mg K

Stove Top Chicken Stuffing (100 g)

- 1,532 mg Na (100% DVR)
- 267 mg K

Healthy Choice Chicken Teriyaki with Rice (269 mg)

- 570 mg Na (38% DRV)
- 0 mg K

Na and K amounts in some common produce:

Cucumbers (52 g)

- 1.04 mg Na
- 761 mg N

Tomatoes (90 g)

- 4.5 mg Na
- 231 mg K

Cabbage (70 g)

- 12.6 mg Na
- 119 mg K

** On average, fruits and veggies have a K:NA ratio of 50:1 so eat up and have a healthy heart!

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Salt and Hypertension

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Are you concerned your salt shaker is breaking your heart? Sodium is an essential nutrient in the body, but too much can cause the heart some stress. Here are answers to some common questions regarding salt...

What is sodium's (Na) role in the body and how much is ok?

Sodium is an electrolyte that helps balance fluids and acid-alkalinity in the body. It is also important for cellular health and energy, muscle and nerve function, and heart function. The USDA recommends 1.5 g/day for people under 50, 1.3 g/day for people 50-70, and 1.2 g/day for people 70+. For reference, 1 teaspoon equates to about 2 grams, so keep your daily salt intake under a teaspoon. (Bauman 2014).

How does salt effect high blood pressure?

One of the jobs of the kidneys is to maintain sodium levels in the body by regulating what is necessary and eliminating the excess. However, if Na levels continue to rise due to dietary intake, the kidney will no long be able to keep up and the body will retain water. The excess water creates pressure on the blood vessel walls and leads to increased blood pressure. (Newell 2014).

What is the proper potassium to sodium ratio (K:Na)?

Sodium must be balanced with potassium (K) for optimal health. Sodium could not perform it's functions without the help of potassium. The optimal K:Na ratio is 5:1. Sadly, it is not uncommon for the American diet to reach a ratio of 1:20! With plenty of fresh fruits and veggies, the 5:1 ratio is not hard to achieve; the problem arises with prepared and processed foods (see column at left). These foods contain added salt to enhance flavors and prevent spoilage.

What is the best type of salt to consume?

It is best to avoid table salt, which is concentrated sodium chloride (with added iodine). The refining process adds chemicals such as anti-cracking/clumping agents that contain aluminum. If you enjoy cooking with salt, choose full-mineral salts such as pink Himalayan. Because they are unrefined and contain other essential minerals, such as magnesium and potassium, they will be have colors of pink, grey, or even black. These salts have less iodine than table salt, so be sure to include other sources of iodine in your diet, like seaweed, fish, dairy, and eggs. (Gunnars 2014).

Sources:

1. Bauman, E., Friedlander, J. (2014). *Foundations of Nutrition Textbook*. Pennngrove, CA: Bauman College.
2. Slides for Sodium and Potassium
3. Gunnars, K. (n.d.). Types of Salt: Himalayan vs Kosher vs Regular vs Sea Salt. Authority Nutrition, An Evidence-based Approach. Available at <http://authoritynutrition.com/different-types-of-salt/>. Last accessed August 7th 2014.
4. NutritionCalc Plus. (2014). Nutrition Analysis Tool. Available through <https://paris-mcgraw-hill.com>.
5. Newell, L. (2014). *Does Salt Cause High Blood Pressure*. Livestrong.com. February 4, 2014. Available at <http://www.livestrong.com/article/414827-does-salt-cause-high-blood-pressure/>. Last accessed August 2, 2014.

