

# NAVIGATING SODIUM INTAKE: A CONSUMER'S GUIDE

## UNDERSTANDING SODIUM INTAKE

High sodium intake **increases blood pressure**, the main contributor to premature death and disability



Americans consume almost **50% more** sodium than recommended



Processed, packaged, and restaurant foods contribute the most to sodium intake with **pizza, burritos, sandwiches and tacos** as major contributors over the salt shaker

## THE ROLE OF SODIUM IN FOODS

Salt plays an essential role in food production, not only **improving taste** but also **keeping food safe** to eat

### Flavor

Increases sweet flavors

Balances bitter and sour flavors

### Preservation

Decreases bacterial growth

Controls water to prevent spoilage

### Sensory

Influences mouth feel

Contributes to foods' expected color

### Production

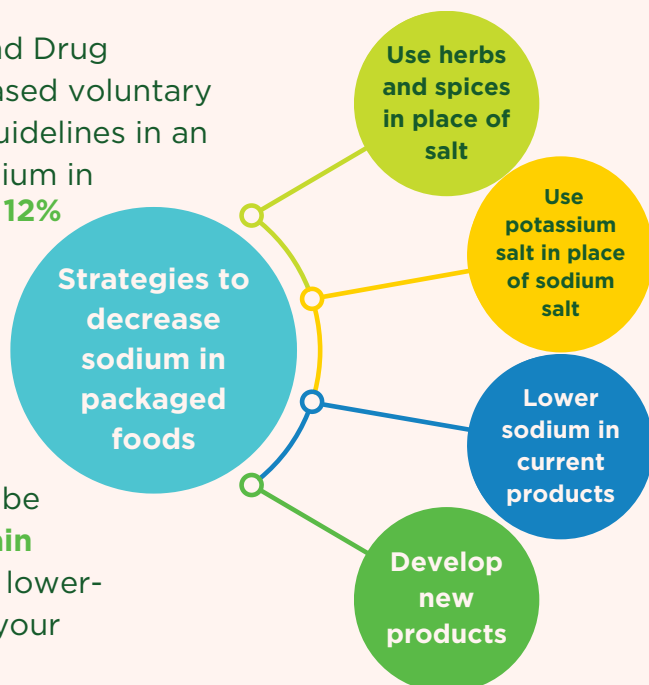
Stabilizes oil and water mixtures

Influences rise in baked goods

## FOOD COMPANIES ARE CUTTING BACK

In 2021, the Food and Drug Administration released voluntary sodium reduction guidelines in an effort to reduce sodium in **packaged foods by 12% by 2025**

**Reformulation** may be necessary to **maintain quality** and **taste** of lower-sodium versions of your favorite foods



## TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR SODIUM INTAKE

**Aim for less than 2300 mg sodium per day**

**Check the nutrition facts** for sodium content

Choose **snacks and sauces** with less than **200 mg** of sodium per serving

Select **ready-to-eat meals** with less than **600 mg** sodium per serving more often

Look for **“smoked,” “pickled,”** or **“cured”** as clues for **high sodium foods**

**Explore lower sodium versions** of your favorite products.