



**Why The War On Salt Is Dangerous**  
**But Still Continues –**  
**Part 1**

For years we have been told that too much salt is bad for us because it contributes to high blood pressure and heart disease. However research is now showing that the war on salt has a number of drawbacks and unintended consequences. To start with, evidence shows having the correct potassium to sodium balance influences your risk for hypertension and heart disease to a far greater extent than high sodium alone, and the Western diet tends to be lacking in potassium.

Moreover, in response to lowering salt in processed foods, many manufacturers took to adding monosodium glutamate (MSG) instead—a flavor enhancer associated with a number of health problems, including obesity, headaches, fatigue and depression. Due to its ability to overexcite neurons, MSG may even raise your risk for neurological disorders such as Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s and Lou Gehrig’s disease.

**Why The War on Salt Is Misguided**

More recent studies note that the relationship between sodium and blood pressure is inconsistent and from a clinical standpoint, insubstantial. Some studies actually show a low-salt diet can worsen cardiovascular disease and raise rather than lower the risk for early death among patients at high risk of heart disease. In addition, lowering salt intake could also decrease insulin sensitivity and have an adverse effect on blood lipids.

**Potassium Level Impacts High Blood Pressure More Than Sodium**

Studies have now clearly shown that having the correct balance of potassium to sodium is far more important than lowering salt alone. Potassium is a naturally occurring mineral your body uses as an electrolyte (substance in solution that conducts electricity), and it is vital for optimal health and normal functioning. It works in your body to relax the walls of your arteries, keep your muscles from cramping, and lowers your blood pressure. The reduction in blood pressure with added potassium has also been associated in studies with a reduced risk of stroke.

While diarrhea, vomiting, excessive sweating (such as when using a sauna) and some drugs may deplete or disrupt your potassium balance, the most common reason for low potassium is eating a potassium-poor diet. If you’re eating mostly processed foods, your sodium-to-potassium balance is virtually guaranteed to be inverted. The average reported intake of potassium from food is about half of the 4,700 mg recommended. Research demonstrates these low levels of potassium may have a significant impact on blood pressure, especially when combined with too much salt.

Dr. Paul Welton, professor of epidemiology at Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, analyzed 29 trials that demonstrated low levels of potassium resulted in higher systolic blood pressure readings. Studies performed since then have found similar results. According to Welton:

*“The evidence is very strong and very consistent. A higher potassium intake may blunt the effects of excess salt on blood pressure. Potassium’s effect is bigger in people who have higher blood pressure, bigger in older people, bigger in people who are consuming a lot of salt and bigger in black people.”*

*To be continued...*

***Soil Lovers say: It’s Generally Recommended That You Consume Five Times More Potassium Than Sodium, But Most Americans Eat Twice As Much Sodium As Potassium.***