

Public urged to reduce excessive salt intake in support of World Hypertension Day

The following is issued on behalf of the Committee on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food:

In support of World Hypertension Day, held annually on May 17, the Committee on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food today (May 17) urged the public to avoid excessive salt intake so as to lower the risk of developing hypertension.

Excessive dietary salt (sodium) intake is a major cause of hypertension. Dubbed "the silent killer", hypertension that does not receive early treatment can lead to serious diseases such as heart disease, stroke and kidney failure, etc. According to the Report of Population Health Survey (PHS) 2020-2022 published by the Department of Health, local persons aged 15 to 84 had an average daily salt intake of 8.4 grams (about 3 400 milligrams of sodium), exceeding the daily limit as recommended by the World Health Organization by over 70 per cent. In addition, one in every four persons (29.5 per cent) among the said age group had hypertension. Among those with hypertension, more than 40 per cent were not aware of having hypertension until attending the PHS health examination.

Reducing one's salt intake helps lower the risk of developing hypertension, cardiovascular disease and stroke. According to studies conducted by the Centre for Food Safety, nearly 70 per cent of sodium intake by local adults comes from condiments and sauces, soup, and processed and cured meat. Reducing the amount of salt intake is not difficult. By gradually cutting back on sodium in one's daily diet, taste buds will become accustomed to the milder taste. Some feasible ways to reduce salt intake are as follows:

- When dining out, request sauces to be served separately from the food, choose a reduced salt option, or dishes with no or less sauce;
- Reduce the consumption of processed foods such as sausage, ham and bacon etc;
- Use fresh foods when cooking at home with natural spices or fruits, such as ginger, green onion, garlic, herbs, chili, turmeric, black pepper, lemon juice, etc as natural seasonings to enhance the flavour of dishes and reduce sodium intake;
- When buying prepackaged food products, check for the sodium content on the food nutrition labels and choose less salt (sodium) foods. For example, the sodium content of tuna in mineral water is less than that of tuna in brine or seasoned tuna

More information on salt and sugar reduction is available on the [Facebook page of Hong Kong's Action on Salt and Sugar Reduction](#).