

Canadians finding it tough to shake the salt habit

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Canadians know that too much salt isn't good for their diets, but half still continue to shake it on, according to a new study by University of Alberta researchers.

In a survey of 890 people measuring knowledge and behaviours regarding [sodium](#) intake, U of A [nutrition](#) researchers Anna Farmer and Diana Mager discovered that the majority of Canadians believe they consume too much sodium and that most are aware that too much sodium can lead to [health problems](#). But only half are actually doing something about it.

The researchers found that Canadians had some idea of the potential health risks of too much sodium; 85 per cent linked high salt intake with high blood pressure, and 80 per cent believed that Canadians' diets are too high in salt. On the other hand, less than half of respondents were aware of how much salt is too much.

Despite that gap in knowledge, about half of the survey participants were actually doing something to reduce sodium consumption, reporting that they never add salt either at the table or while cooking.

"It's good news that Canadians understand some of the issues around excessive sodium consumption, and that at least half are willing to adjust their behaviour to reduce salt use," said Farmer, a professor of agricultural food and nutritional science at the U of A. "Most respondents in this survey understood that canned or processed foods are

among the highest sources of dietary sodium. But the results also show that there's still room for more education."

Farmer wants to see salt-reduction messages aimed at young adults between 18 and 24 years and families with young children. Fewer people in that age group understood, for example, that [salt](#) is the major contributor to total sodium consumed, or that foods cooked from scratch are generally lower in sodium. Families with young children had the least confidence in their knowledge about [dietary sodium](#) and were less likely to read nutrition labels for sodium content.

Source: University of Alberta ([news](#) : [web](#))

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