



Chef Charles Says...

A newsletter for congregate meal participants for the month of June

Chef Charles Club is defined as a group of people who meet with a leader or instructor to learn and discuss how nutrition and physical activity can make a difference in their lives. Participants receive a monthly Chef Charles newsletter from the instructor.

The survey data we collect from Chef Charles participants tells us that instructors do make a difference. For example, in 2009 Chef Charles focused on encouraging participants to eat more fruits and veggies. Chef Charles Club members who participated in activities reported eating more fruits and veggies at meals (56%) and snacks (50%) while those who **just read** the newsletter alone reported more produce consumption at meals (40%) and snacks (39%). While both groups were eating more fruits and veggies, those with an instructor made a bigger change. The time you spend preparing for a Chef Charles Club is valuable for the health of your participants. **Thank you.**

The June, July and August Chef Charles newsletters will focus on the sodium in our food. There has been renewed public attention on sodium consumption and its adverse effects on health due in part to a recent report on sodium intake from The Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academies.

High blood pressure (hypertension) affects about one in three adults in the United States and can lead to coronary heart disease, stroke, heart failure, kidney failure, and other health problems. Decades of research published in peer-reviewed journals have established high sodium intake as an important cause of high blood pressure. In addition, several research studies have clearly demonstrated that reducing the amount of sodium in one's diet can significantly lower blood pressure and can help safely prevent or control high blood pressure. You will have the opportunity to help Chef Charles participants change their salt habit.

Chef Charles is concerned that many older adults who are eligible are not participating in the Food Stamp Program. It is now called SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program); in Iowa the program is called Food Assistance. As an instructor for Chef Charles you can help those in your club understand that the SNAP program can make a big difference in their food budget. The **Pick A Better Veggie for You** article gives you an opportunity to discuss how the SNAP program can help older adults buy enough fruits and vegetables for a healthy diet. It just takes a little planning to make sure the produce is available when you prepare a meal or a snack. Other activities you can do include:

- Invite a Department of Human Services Staff member to your site to talk about the Food Assistance program.
- Bookmark www.benefitscheckup.org on site computers for participants to visit.
- Remind participants that the EBT cards are handy to use at local stores for food purchases. Many of the farmers' markets also take EBT cards.



- Encourage participants to apply on-line for Food Assistance www.yesfood.iowa.gov.

We encourage you to use the questions at the end of the instructor's guide. This provides feedback to us regarding the success of the Chef Charles program in helping participants to eat healthier, be more active and have safe food. Ask your group the questions at the beginning of your Chef Charles meeting and then again at the end. This will reinforce key points and identify if the participants know the answers.

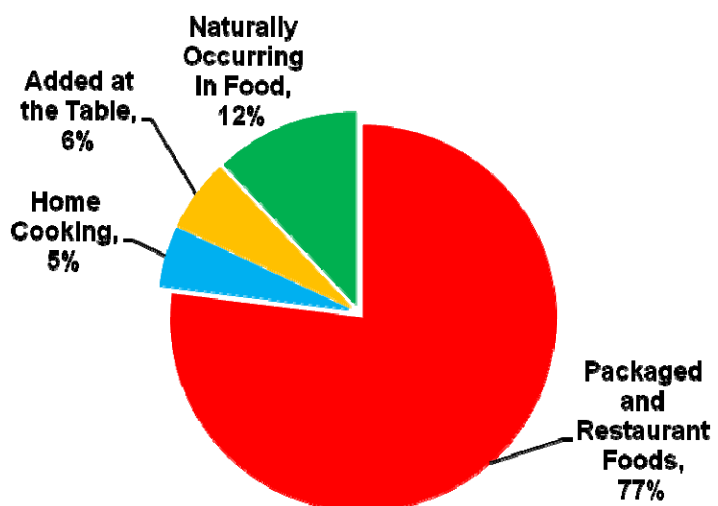
Get The News

Props:

- Salt shaker with easy-to-remove lid
- Towel or napkin placed over the shaker
- ¼ teaspoon measure
- 1 can chicken noodle soup

Congress is concerned about your salt shaker!

Why is Congress concerned about salt shakers? The average person in America consumes about 3,500 milligrams (mg) of sodium a day. That is more than twice the 1,500 mg recommended for people 40 and older, African-Americans and anyone with high blood pressure. Seventy percent of Americans fit in this category. In April, 2010, Congress received a report from the Institute of Medicine with recommendations on how to lower the amount of sodium in the American diet. The major change suggested by the report is to have restaurants and food manufacturers, over time, lower the sodium in their foods. Sodium can raise blood pressure, multiplying the risk of heart attacks and especially strokes. You can hide the salt shaker and only control eleven percent of the sodium found in your diet. The rest of the sodium naturally occurs in foods and is in processed, pre-packaged foods or restaurant foods.



Mattes and Donnelly, JACN, 1991; 10: 383



What is Salt?

When you hear the word, salt most people think of table salt, a seasoning found in most kitchens. The term salt does not mean the same as sodium because salt is only 40 percent sodium. Table salt is made of sodium and chloride.

Common Terms used to describe salt in food products

- **Sodium-free:** less than 5 milligrams of sodium per serving
- **Very low-sodium:** 35 milligrams or less per serving
- **Low-sodium:** 140 milligrams or less per serving
- **Reduced sodium:** usual sodium level is reduced by 25 percent
- **Unsalted, no salt added or without added salt:** made without the salt that's normally used, but still contains the sodium that's a natural part of the food itself

Activity

Say to the group: I want you to guess what I have under the towel on the table. I will tell you it is a substance that:

- It is known to raise blood pressure
- Adds flavor to our food
- Has a renewed focus by health professionals to limit our consumption

If you guessed salt, you are right. (*remove towel*) Now, are salt and sodium the same thing? Not exactly. So, when we talk about limiting the sodium in our diet to improve our health, we are talking about more than just table salt. Let's take a look at the chart in the newsletter. 11% of the sodium consumed is in our control when we use the salt shaker at home (*cooking and adding at the table*) but 77% of the sodium is found in processed foods and foods we eat away from our home. This means we need to read the label and ingredient list carefully and limit processed foods.

How much sodium is recommended for you to consume each day? **1500 mg**. Let's do some math. Does anyone know how much sodium is in one teaspoon of salt? **2400mg**. (*Measure one teaspoon of salt from the salt shaker using the ¼ teaspoon measure. Using ¼ teaspoon measure allows you to compare the two amounts of sodium more easily*) Here is the equivalent of 2400 mg of sodium. If you are trying to eat just 1500 mg a day you would need only a little more than ½ teaspoon. (*Measure and compare the two salts.*) The salt coming from your salt shaker is in your control but the processed or ready to eat foods are not.

Here is another comparison. Let's look at the can of commercially made noodle soup (*have a volunteer read the label*). How many of you would eat the whole can of soup? Let's see what would mean. Looking at the nutrition facts label, how much sodium is in the soup? If you answer 890 mg, you are only half right



because the can of soup has two servings. So, we have to double the amounts on the nutrition fact label. That would be 1780 mg sodium which is more than what is recommended for you each day.

Reading a label can give you good information. Check out the wording (*review salt definitions in newsletter*) that is used on a label to let you know about the sodium content.

Pick a Better...

Props:

- Menu from local restaurant
- Nutrition information brochure from McDonalds or another fast-food restaurant
- Magnifying glass

Ice cream, sherbet, frozen yogurt, and angel food cake are all lower-sodium dessert choices.

Restaurant Food with Salt

For many people, eating out is something they do to relax and socialize. To avoid sodium when you eat out requires extra effort, because you cannot always tell by looking at the menu which items are high in sodium. It often depends on how the restaurant prepares the meal, what ingredients they use, and how much salt they add. Here are some ways to avoid sodium when you dine out.

- Choose restaurants where the food is made to order, instead of choosing fast-food or buffet-style restaurants.
- Ask how the food is prepared and if the restaurant offers low-sodium menu items.
- Request that your meal be prepared with no added salt.
- Ask for the nutrition information when you do eat at a fast-food restaurant. Most fast-food restaurants have nutrition information available, including sodium content.
- If you eat at a restaurant several times a week, it is worth your time to talk to the cook or chef to learn how much salt is added to recipes. Also, ask about what packaged products are used, because they usually have a lot of sodium.
- When you eat out, try to eat very low-sodium items the rest of the day. This will help you stay within your sodium limit for the day.
- While fresh beef, pork, chicken and turkey are naturally low in sodium, many processors sell so-called "enhanced" products which are essentially marinated in salt water. While different brands of processed products, such as bacon, sausage, deli meats, hot dogs and frozen dinners, may appear extremely similar, the sodium content often varies widely from brand to brand.
- Learn what food items are okay and which ones to avoid. For example, 1 tablespoon of soy sauce has more than 1,000 mg of sodium, and 1 teaspoon of salt has about 2,000 mg of sodium. You can use the following list, Tips for Eating Out, and bring it with you to the restaurant.



Tips for Eating Out

| Foods to Avoid | Instead, choose or ask for... |
|---|---|
| Smoked, cured, and salted meat, fish, and poultry | Fresh, grilled, baked, poached, or broiled meat, fish, or poultry |
| Canned vegetables | Fresh steamed vegetables with no added salt. (Assume that cooked vegetables have added salt unless you ask for them to be prepared without it.) |
| Condiments, such as pickles, olives, tartar sauce, and ketchup | Pepper, spice mixtures such as Mrs. Dash, fresh herbs such as cilantro in a Mexican restaurant, sliced cucumbers, malt vinegar, low-sodium ketchup and mustard, lemon and lime wedges |
| Sauces, including soy sauce, canned tomato sauce, au jus, and gravy | Low-sodium soy sauce, olive oil |
| Salad dressings | Oil and vinegar, lemon juice, or low-sodium dressing |
| Fast foods, including french fries, pizza, and tacos | Plain baked potato, grilled chicken sandwich |
| Soups and broths | Salads without croutons, bacon, cheese, or olives |
| Any drink that contains tomato juice or V-8. This includes alcoholic drinks like a Bloody Mary. | Orange juice, other citrus juices, or soft drinks |
| Fried or seasoned rice | Steamed plain rice. (Asian restaurants often add salt to steamed rice. Be sure to ask for steamed rice without added salt.) |
| Pasta with tomato sauce or paste | Pasta tossed in olive oil or with fresh tomatoes |



Activity

To gain more control over the sodium in food when you eat out, you have to be a detective (*hold up the magnifying glass or put eye glasses on to suggest you are taking a closer look at the menu*).

You have to:

- Read the menu (show menu), or fast food nutrition information
- Ask questions
- Select carefully

To give you a head start, the newsletter has a chart with suggested alternatives to help lower the sodium when you are eating out. You may want to take the chart with you to a restaurant to help you select lower-sodium meals. Let's take a look at the chart suggestions.

Chef Charles Asks the Questions

Props:

- Sponge
- Container of water

Activity

How does sodium harm my body?

Sodium causes your body to hold extra water. This can make certain conditions, such as heart failure or kidney disease, worse. For example, if you have heart failure, too much sodium makes it harder for your already weakened heart to pump extra fluid and can lead to sudden heart failure. Fluid may build up in your lungs, making it harder for you to breathe, and in your feet, ankles, legs, and stomach.

Have a volunteer place the sponge in the container and let it absorb the water. How is the sponge different? It is heavier because it is full of water. If your body is 'retaining' water, it makes it difficult for your heart and lungs to function not to mention the swelling that can happen to your feet and hands.

Be Active

Props:

- One or two garden tools like a hoe or trowel
- Wrist watch

Get Fit While Enjoying Gardening

Standing, squatting, stretching and bending. Sound like an exercise class? Those are really motions needed to practice gardening. Gardening is an activity that can be effective in building endurance, balance, flexibility and strength. In fact, one hour of active gardening is roughly equivalent to a two to three hour walk. Just be sure to limber up before hitting the dirt to avoid sore backs, pulled muscles and other injuries.

Here are some reminders for getting in gardening shape and staying there:

- Pace yourself. Do the hard stuff first, before you are tired out and more likely to overexert. **Wristwatch**
- Don't hunch. If you squat when you weed, keep your back as



straight as possible and move along as you weed, don't reach too far. **Demonstrate weeding without straining**

- When lifting, always bend from the knees, not the waist, and try to keep your back straight. Use your thigh muscles to do the lifting. Move your feet closer to the object you are lifting and take a wide stance, to balance yourself. Keep the object close to you as you lift it. **Demonstrate actions and ask volunteers to help you**
- Don't lift and twist in the same movement.
- Kneel on both knees at the same time to avoid the temptation to twist or strain. Use a knee pad.
- Use tools with comfortable handles. Wrap the grip with an old piece of hose or coat with rubber paint, for gripping comfort. Remember to change hands from time to time. **Garden tool**
- When using long handled tools, stand straight and keep your knees relaxed. If you need to twist or pivot, step into the twist to ease tension on the back.
- Use a wheelbarrow or wagon to save your body.

Activity

How many of you grow a garden or help someone else grow a garden? Gardening is great exercise but to avoid injury, you need to be careful. I have some ideas to help you make the most of your gardening experience. Have a volunteer read each of the bulleted suggestions in the newsletter article while you demonstrate the suggestion. If you have a willing volunteer that can help you demonstrate the suggestion, make sure to use them.

Food Safety

Props:

- Bulleted points-one each written on a small piece of paper
- Hat or basket to hold the small pieces of paper.

Hold the Mold

Some molds are safe, some harmful. The molds that are an essential part of blue cheeses are safe, for instance. But the fuzzy molds on some foods can be toxic. Molds on grains are generally the worst. Besides the visible mold, threadlike mold toxins can penetrate the food. Mold toxins cannot be destroyed by cooking. The greatest risk is for those who are in poor health. Remember:

- Do not buy produce with mold on it.
- Keep food refrigerated to discourage mold.
- Keep produce dry, and wash it only when ready to eat it. Moisture promotes mold.
- Throw out moldy bread and grain products, as well as moldy meats, nuts, peanut butter, soft cheese, yogurt, jams, syrups, applesauce, leftovers and soft fruit such as melons or peaches.
- Discard small fruits if moldy. If a few berries are moldy, it is okay to eat the rest, but look them over carefully.



- Cut a small area of mold out of a large, hard fruit or vegetable such as an apple, potato, cauliflower, or onion. Cut one inch around the mold.
- It is okay to cut mold off hard cheese which has less moisture. Cut at least an inch away from the mold.
- When in doubt, throw it out.

UC Berkeley Wellness Newsletter, March 2010

Activity

Say to the group: It is difficult for a person living alone to keep fresh bread. (*Show picture of moldy bread.*) And it is a serious problem if you eat bread that has become moldy. So how do we protect ourselves from mold? I am going to pass around the basket and have you select one piece of paper; read it to the group; and share if you have ever experienced this type of mold and what you did to take care of it.

| Moldy bread and grain products | Moldy soft cheese |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Moldy Meats | Moldy yogurt |
| Moldy peanut butter | Moldy nuts |
| Moldy jam | Moldy syrup |
| Moldy applesauce | Moldy melon |
| Moldy peaches | Moldy berries |
| Moldy apples | Moldy potatoes |
| Moldy cauliflower | Moldy onion |
| Moldy hard cheese | |





Snacks

Teaching Points:

- Seedless watermelon can save time.
- Canned beans instead of dried beans save time.
- Rinsing the beans removes sodium.
- ½ cup is one serving of fruit or vegetables.

Pick a better snack



Watermelon Salsa

- 1 cup diced seedless watermelon
- 1/3 cup finely chopped sweet onions
- 1/3 cup canned black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 green bell pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh cilantro
- 1 teaspoon brown sugar
- ½ garlic clove, minced

In a small bowl, combine all ingredients. Cover and refrigerate for at least one hour. Drain if necessary before serving. Serves 3-1/2 cup servings. The salsa can be served as an appetizer with baked chips, or as a condiment with fish or pork.

128 calories; 240 mg sodium; 28 g carbohydrate; 487 mg potassium; 64 mcg folate

Recipes

Teaching Points:

- Whole wheat pasta provides fiber.
- Summer fresh vegetables make this a colorful dish.
- Rinsing canned chickpeas lowers the sodium content.
- What other vegetables could you include in this dish? Suggestions: cucumber, steamed broccoli or cauliflower
- Leftovers store well for a second meal.

Cold Fusilli Pasta with Summer Vegetables

- 8 ounces whole-wheat (spiral) pasta
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes, rinsed and halved
- 1 green bell pepper, rinsed and sliced in pieces about ¼ inch wide by 2 inches long
- ½ cup red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 medium zucchini, rinsed and shredded finely or sliced into small chunks (about 1 cup)
- 1 can (15 ½ oz) low-sodium chickpeas (garbanzo beans), drained and rinsed
- 1 tablespoon fresh basil, rinsed, dried, and cut into thin strips (or 1 teaspoon dried)
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- ½ cup shredded parmesan cheese

In a four-quart saucepan, bring three quarts of water to a boil over high heat. Add pasta, and cook according to package directions for the shortest recommended time, about eight to nine minutes. Drain. Rinse pasta under cold running water to cool, about three minutes. Place all vegetables and beans in a large salad serving bowl. Season with basil and pepper. Combine oil and vinegar in a small bowl. Mix until completely blended. Pour over vegetables and pasta. Mix gently until well coated. Divide into four portions. Top each with two tablespoons of parmesan cheese.

Makes 4 servings. Each serving contains: 418 calories; 11g total fat; 10 mg cholesterol; 455 mg sodium; 13 g fiber; 21 g protein; 63g carbohydrates; 576 mg potassium; 125 mcg folate. Adapted from NHLBI Healthy Eating website.



Instructors' Guide June 2010



Did You Learn Any New Ideas?

1. How much sodium should a person over 40 plan to consume?
2. Where do people consume the most sodium?
3. If you have a loaf of bread that is moldy, what should you do?
4. How does rinsing canned vegetables including beans help to improve your diet?
5. When lifting heavy items in the garden always bend from the _____?

Your Answers

Order Your Materials (provided to Iowa Nutrition Network Partners Only)

Contact Name

Congregate Meal Site

Address

City, State and Zip

Phone Number

| Month | # Newsletters | # Incentives |
|-----------|---|---|
| June 2010 | ____ Congregate Meal Site Participants | The incentive for April through June is an orange squeeze ball. |

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Instructors' Guide

June 2010



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Your Answers

1,500 mg

Processed food & restaurants

Throw it away

Lowers sodium

Knees

Chef Charles Says...

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