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DR. CHARLES' HEALTH CHAT

SEE SALT, SEE FOOD, SEA SALT

Salt is mentioned many times in the Bible as a seasoning and staple ingredient in food. Our bodies need salt, but in today's world of plenty, more is not necessarily better. The excessive amounts of salt being added to food products today is damaging to our bodies and medical authorities repeatedly advise cutting down salt intake to reduce your chance of high blood pressure, and its followers - stroke and heart attack.

Chemical analysis of some 'canned soups' reveals a salt content higher than that of sea water. Hummm... when was the last time you had a glass of sea water, other than for purgatory purposes?

The UK Health Education Authority (HEA) suggests that the recommended daily intake of salt should be around 6 grams per day whereas the average is in the region of 9 to 15 grams, equaling nearly a half an ounce of the crystalline powder. Most all processed foods already contain salt and the HEA states that up to 2/3 of the average intake, and excess consumption, is ingested this way in the food. This leaves the remainder that is applied as 'discretionary' salt, at the kitchen and dinner table. According to an article published in the November 7, 1996 Medical Tribune, some people are more sensitive to salt than others and those people are four times more likely to develop hypertension. Salt now is referred to as a new age 'addiction,' and that addicts are part of a new epidemic of heart disease and cancer.

Many health advocates state the problem of today's cardiovascular stress is the foul sodium/potassium ratio typical of the Western diet. The famous country doctor, Dr. Jarvis aptly stated that the body is in an 'eternal battle' over the forces of sodium and potassium. For example, the body's cells, the some many trillion of them, contain a predominance of potassium, while the body's fluids contain a predominance of sodium. When sodium invades the cell in favor of potassium, we begin to dehydrate, wither up and age, among host of other things. The body rebels by craving liquids, the body's tissues swell, and thus the eternal battle is sparked. Salt intake follows pop, pop follows more salt, and what follows is obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Dr. Jarvis, in his excellent book FOLK MEDICINE, advocates the use of apple cider vinegar, one teaspoon full, in a glass of water, four times a day, to treat aches and pains, high blood pressure, and arteriosclerosis. He states: "Potassium is to the soft tissues what calcium is to the hard tissues of the body. There is little doubt that potassium slows up the hardening processes that menace the whole blood vessel system. Because potassium present in apple cider vinegar makes the meat of the dairy cow or bull tender when it is slaughtered for beef, there is very little doubt that one of the functions of potassium is to keep the tissue soft and pliable."

In the "olden days," when everyone was forced to eat an unprocessed and exclusively natural foods diet, people were consuming much more potassium than sodium. This was organic, because our bodies are designed to eliminate excess sodium and hold onto potassium. But modern processing and preserving techniques have produced the reverse ratio, so most diets are usually quite low in potassium and extremely high in sodium, predisposing people to top killer diseases, such as high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, stroke, and cancer.

There is much debate as to the proper potassium-to-sodium ratio, so if you are interested in establishing a guideline for yourself, please seek the counsel of your health care provider. People from different lifestyles require different amounts of salt. People on "see-food" diets, those who eat a lot of snacks, those who eat a lot of meat, those who eat out a lot, those who care not what they eat, and those so disposed, will benefit by reducing salt in the diet. Athletes, vegetarians, and those who live in hot climates like us, tend to require a little more sodium.

Today a healthier potassium-to-sodium ratio can be easily achieved by reducing salt intake. Eating mostly an organic, whole, natural foods diet, and avoiding processed foods, which where 90 percent of an average person's sodium comes from. The other 10 percent is consumed by salt shaker and that found naturally in foods.

Today, one should be able to get enough sodium from most any store bought food or restaurant without even trying. Potassium is abundant in most natural, unprocessed food particularly fresh fruits and veggies. If you are having trouble getting enough potassium, however, you might consider taking apple cider vinegar as Dr. Jarvis advises. And of course, there is always fresh vegetable and fruit juices.

So, our bodies need salt (sodium), but is all salt the same? Chemists would say yes, naturopaths would say NO. Rock salt, that you buy in the store mined from caves and excavations, commonly called 'halite' by geologists, is what you probably dash all over your food. Salt manufacturers found a long time ago that there was money to be made in the salt business. Natural salt is loaded with all kinds of minerals. The salt manufacturer in the refining process, however, takes all of the minerals out. They use these minerals for other products and also sell the minerals to industry. The left over salt goes to the food industry.

Unrefined Sea Salt has been around as long as the earth has. Man has eaten unrefined sea salt for thousands of years. Celtic salt, off the coast of France is considered a national treasure. In San Francisco and Hawaii, sea salt is harvested and prized for its flavor and healthful benefits. Many nutritionists are now looking to the sea as it seems the human blood contains the same variety as trace minerals in the ocean, posing an interesting twist to the Darwinian hypothesis. It stands to reason that natural sea salt can help the body maintain its health and vitality.

Unrefined Sea Salt has all 92 elements and minerals that occur naturally on the earth in varying quantities. This is a perfect mix according to mother nature, who always has Her ways, without exception. When you eat Natural Salt your body gets all the minerals and elements it needs to stay in health. It helps produce well being and calmness. Since all the elements and minerals are in the proper proportions they are not harmful to the body. Apparently the refined, processed salt is not good for the body, since the public is told not to eat it, to avoid high blood pressure.

Yet, there is one more twist to the story. Store salt is kiln dried at more than 1000°F to make it powdery and flaky. In other words, they bake the halite out of it. According to the

naturalist Mark Gallert, that process deranges the salt molecule, making some granular form unfit for consumption - the body rejects it, depositing it in the urine and sweat. Dr. Gallert also states, when the body has been abused so long with unnatural forms of sodium, it begins to deposit it in the tissues, in the form of hardening of the arteries and lumps in the muscle tissue. He states, which the author has verified, after eating this form of salt, it is immediately found in the urine.

As the author repeatedly states, we have many wonders and benefits as residents of Nevis. Salt is a plenty by a drive to the beach. Natural Sea salt is made by sun evaporating clean seawater. What is left when the water evaporates is just the salt we all need. The grains of sea salt can be coarse or fine, are easily mashed up in the blender, or put in a bag and pounded with a hammer, but even fine-grained sea salt tends to be larger than the table salt we are used to. Many health advocates consider it to be the best salt for cooking, while the fine can be spared for sprinkling at the table; it is the certainly most inexpensive.

So here's the technique. Solar evaporative salt production requires 65 tonnes of sea water to produce one tonne of sea salt. Or, 65 ounces (two quarts) of sea water, will give you one ounce of sea salt. Sea water, which contains about three per cent salt, can be collected in buckets and taken home to be laid out in a large tub. Just let it sit there and it will dry, leaving you all the salt you need.

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