



SODIUM

OBJECTIVES:

- Understand sodium
- Recognize why sodium is important for the body, but why too much sodium can be harmful
- Be able to use food labels to find sodium content of food

LET'S GET STARTED:

- Explain the components of sodium
- Understand that sodium can be found on food labels
- Review foods that have lots of sodium
- Explain how sodium helps the body function, but why too much can be harmful
- Discuss foods with high sodium content

STORY:

- Read the story about Boss and his friends understanding what sodium is and how it affects your body if you eat too much of it

WRAPPING UP:

- Remind students about sodium's role in the body

LET'S GET STARTED!

- This week we are going to talk about sodium! Ask students if anyone knows what sodium is. Explain what sodium is, where it comes from, and remind them that it can be found on food labels. Use the food label diagram from the Introduction to the Food Label lesson to review where sodium can be found. Explain the importance of sodium to the body, and explain the negative effects of consuming too much sodium.

DIALOGUE BOX

- Today we are going to talk about sodium! Does anyone know what sodium is?
 - Sodium is a mineral that our body needs in order to work properly. It is found in the food we eat in the form of salt.
- Salt is made up of two minerals, sodium and chloride. The salt you cook with and put on your food is known as sodium chloride.
- Sodium chloride can be found in the ground, and it is often obtained by mining. It is also found in seawater. Have you ever been to the ocean and noticed how salty the water is? That's sodium chloride also!
- The amount of salt in your food can be found on the food label. If you look, you will see sodium on food labels- that's the same thing as salt.
- Salt has some important functions in the body. It balances the water and other chemicals in your body and helps other nutrients from food you eat be absorbed.
- Your body needs salt to work properly, but sometimes you can have too much salt. If you eat too much salt, it can lead to heart problems.
- If there is too much salt in your body, you might feel thirsty. This is how your body tells you that there is too much salt and you need more water to balance it out.
- Discuss the salt content of different foods and what type of foods have the most salt. Explain how much salt is okay to have and how much is too much.

DIALOGUE BOX

- When you think about salt, you probably think about the salt shaker that you use to add salt to your meals. Actually, a lot of food you eat already has tons of salt in it!
- Processed foods, like canned and packaged foods, usually have a lot of salt because it helps keep them fresh longer. Fast food and restaurant food are also very salty. Most people have learned to like the taste of salty food, but it's not very good for your health.
 - Things like soups, sauces, chips, biscuits, and pasta meals have a lot of sodium and can add up quickly. Processed foods are the reason why many people eat more salt than they need.
- You should only consume about 2,300 milligrams of sodium daily, but most Americans eat much more than that. Because sodium content is listed on food labels, it should be easy to make sure you're not eating too much—all you have to do is read the label!
- It is important to try to limit your salt intake because it's not good for your body to digest too much salt. Try looking at food labels and you will see a lot of sodium in foods you probably didn't think have a lot of salt!

DIALOGUE BOX

- Try cutting down on the processed foods you eat, and resist adding salt to your meals. You will find that more often than not your food will still taste good even when you don't add a bunch of extra salt.

STORY

- Read to the students the story about Boss and his friends understanding what sodium is and how it can affect your body if you eat too much of it

WRAPPING UP

- Ask students if there are any questions about sodium or the activity and review the story
- Have students talk about their favorite parts of the story about Boss and what they learned



Too Much Sodium

Boss was still trying his best to be extremely healthy, and make sure he was choosing the right foods that will make him strong and healthy! He had already learned about calories, fat, sugar, and even portion control from his friends, and he thought he was on his way to living a healthier life! Not only was he eating better, he continued to play sports and be active, which made him feel more energetic during the day! One day, Boss and his friends were walking around outside when Boss said, "Would you all want to go by the convenience store to grab a snack?" His friends all said yes; so, they grabbed some money and began walking down to the store. When they arrived, many of his friends went to grab an apple or one for the bananas that was sitting up by the front, but Boss went back for some salted peanuts. He walked up to the front of the store when one of his friends, Jake, said, "Boss, did you not want a fruit like we all got?" Boss said, "No, I ate a lot of fruit for breakfast this morning! So, I decided to get some of the salted peanuts instead!" His friends said back, "Well the peanut are a healthy snack, but those are covered in sodium!" Boss asked, "What? What is sodium? And why is it on my peanuts?" Jake began explaining what sodium is, "Sodium is the same thing as salt. Your peanuts have a lot of salt on them, which is a way to make them taste better. Adding all that salt not only gives the peanuts flavor, but it can make the peanuts taste better in general, which is why people love them so much! When you eat too much salt, your body cannot process all of that salt. You may start to feel fluffy, and your eyes may even feel swollen from all of the salt your body absorbed." After listening to his friend speak, Boss asked, "So, salt is unhealthy for me and I should not eat things with salt on them?" His friend quickly said, "No, that is not it at all. Everybody needs sodium, or salt, in his or her food because our bodies need some sodium to function properly and help our cells work the way they are supposed to. The issue is when too much salt comes in to our systems. But a small bag of peanuts will not do much damage, as long as you do not eat much more sodium for the rest of the day!" Boss was very glad his friend had been teaching him about sodium, and how it can affect your body, either in a good way or a bad way! Boss asked, "Are there other foods that have a lot of sodium in them? Or is it just the peanuts?" Jake said, "Oh no it is not just the peanuts! Many other foods have way too much sodium in them, and half of the time you would not even realize it! For example, canned soups have a ton of sodium in them! A lot of take out food also has a lot of sodium in them, which can potentially make you feel sluggish the next morning when you wake up! A good way to stay away from salty foods is to look at the food label and also look for things that say "low sodium." Many soups, for example, will have a low sodium option that has a lot less sodium in it, which will help you feel better!" Boss said, "Thank you so much Jake for teaching me about sodium, and how too much of it can affect my body, and make me feel bad! I will start looking for lower sodium options for the foods I eat, and try my best to not salt things before I eat them!"