What is salt and why does it matter for health?

> Salt is made up of sodium and chloride. People are eating too much sodium in the form of salt, which is bad for health.
> Too much sodium increases the risk of high blood pressure, which is a leading cause of death and disability in Victoria.
> High salt intake is also linked to heart failure, stomach cancer and osteoporosis.

Where does the salt we eat come from?

> Around 75% of salt in the Australian diet comes from processed foods:
> Pizza, processed meats, takeaway foods and salty snacks...
> and surprisingly large amounts come from everyday foods such as breads, cereal-based dishes and pasta sauces.
> Salt is also added to food during cooking or meals through stock, sauces and table salt.

The story in Victoria

> Victorians eat almost twice the amount of salt that is recommended
> On average for adults: 8g
> THE REALITY:
> Victorians eat a combined total of over 15,000 tonnes of salt every year*

What can be achieved?

If Victorians reduce their salt intake by 3g per day through salt reduction strategies, we can achieve:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TONNES</th>
<th>6000</th>
<th>800</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Livestock saved</td>
<td>6000</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost savings</td>
<td>$50M per year</td>
<td>x200 more cost effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action required</td>
<td>To achieve our goal, more and faster action is needed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on 2013 Victorian population figures and average salt intakes

High blood pressure accounts for approximately half of all:

- Strokes
- Heart disease
- Chronic kidney disease deaths

> 1 in 20 deaths in Victoria in 2010 were attributable to high salt intake
> =6x the annual road toll in Victoria
> 1 in 4 Victorians have high blood pressure

Almost 6000 tonnes less salt eaten by Victorians each year.

Approximately 800 lives saved each year from stroke and heart disease. At least as many serious events that cause disability prevented.

Research showed that salt reduction strategies are cost-effective interventions.

Potential savings in Victoria of $50 million in health care costs alone.

Salt reduction strategies are up to 200 times more cost-effective than treatment with hypertension medication.

The success of the UK salt reduction program is recognised worldwide.

WHAT’S OUR PLAN OF ACTION?

The Salt Reduction Strategic Partnership, led by VicHealth, is taking action to:

1. Work in partnership with governments, the food industry, non-government organisations and the Victorian public to build a shared responsibility and commitment to action on salt.
2. Develop a collaborative approach from governments, non-government organisations, food industry players, media and the Victorian public.
3. Strengthen healthy policies
   - Ensure that policies and initiatives that support a healthier food supply are established, monitored and reported on, prioritising public-funded institutions and services as champions for change.
4. Develop innovative approaches within the food industry
   - Support food manufacturers to commit to food reformulation approaches and food labelling programs.
   - Promote adoption of low salt practices in food service and the dining out sector, such as lowering salt in ready-to-eat meals and foods, reducing salt in food service meal preparation and taking salt shakers off the tables in cafés, restaurants and other eateries.
5. Undertake research, monitoring and evaluation
   - Establish and resource regular monitoring systems to understand salt intakes, including salt intakes, and measure progress towards the salt reduction targets.

TAKING SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACTION ON SALT IN VICTORIA

To meet the World Health Organization (WHO) targets and to enjoy the health and economic benefits of lower salt intakes in Victoria, the Salt Reduction Strategic Partnership has established from the evidence that the following public health activities are required:

1. Build strong partnerships
   - Create a coordinated plan to ensure we are on track to reduce salt by 30% by 2025 in Victoria.
2. Increase public awareness and debate
   - Create a stronger awareness of the recommended upper limit for salt intake and what people are eating almost twice this amount and what can be done to reduce salt in the diet.
   - Increase knowledge about the invisible salt in our diets – the unnecessary salt that’s added to everyday foods during processing and in meal preparation to increase consumer demand for foods and meals that are lower in salt.
   - Invest in creative public awareness activities that reinforce the key message of eating a healthy diet and avoiding too much salt in foods.
3. Strengthen healthy policies
   - Ensure that policies and initiatives that support a healthier food supply are established, monitored and reported on, prioritising public-funded institutions and services as champions for change.
4. Develop innovative approaches within the food industry
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References