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MOST AUSSIE KIDS STILL EATING TOO MUCH SALT

Health promotion foundation VicHealth has welcomed a new Deakin University report which found 80 per cent of Australian children are eating too much salt, with most of it coming from processed food.

Despite showing a small reduction in overall salt intake over the past nine years, the study released today found the majority of kids were still consuming more salt than was recommended for good health.

The study also looked at the impact of the [voluntary salt targets set in 2009](#) on the salt content in processed foods. Although some food categories did have a reduction in salt (including sauces, breakfast cereals and bread) some had no change (soup and cheese) and others an increase in salt content (sausages, savoury biscuits). Since 2009 there have been no renewed salt targets set.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said too much salt was having an alarming impact on kids' health.

"It's concerning that 80 per cent of our kids are eating too much salt putting them at risk of high blood pressure, which can lead to stroke and heart disease in adulthood," Ms Rechter said.

"Not only are we putting our kids at risk of a future of poor health, we're setting them up to like the taste of salty food."

VicHealth Dietician Jenny Reimers said the research showed the need for continued pressure on Government and manufacturers to reduce the amount of salt in processed foods.

"75 percent of the salt in our diets comes from processed foods like simmer sauces, ready meals and processed meats. These foods can be made less salty but at the moment there is no motivation for manufacturers to do so," Ms Reimers said.

"There has been some good work but we need more commitment from food manufacturers to reduce the amount of salt in their products.

"Setting targets can be effective to drive down salt levels in foods, as was seen by the reduction in salt in sauces and bread.

"We need government commitment to set salt targets across key foods to drive reformulation in the food industry"

"Australia has committed to meet the World Health Organization target of a 30 per cent reduction in salt by 2025. We urgently need to reduce the amount of salt in processed foods to even get close to this."

VicHealth leads the Victorian Salt Reduction Partnership, which recently called for government to set targets to drive industry to reformulate their products with less salt. More information is available at <https://unpackthesalt.com.au/salt-reformulation-in-australia/>

VicHealth spokespeople are available for comment. To arrange contact VicHealth Senior Media Advisor Rachel Murphy on 0435 761 732 or email rmurphy@vichealth.vic.gov.au