

# THE SECRET TO CUTTING BACK ON ADDED SUGAR AND SALT

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## The Secret to Cutting Back on Added Sugar and Salt

What if there was one thing you could do that would eliminate 80% of the excess sugar and salt in your diet? You can eat healthier without giving up desserts and potatoes!

If you're like the average adult, you're likely eating too much sugar and salt. **Most of that comes from processed foods you buy in supermarkets and restaurants.**

To make matters worse, many of these items, like sweetened breakfast cereals and soda, are ultra-processed. They're full of artificial ingredients made in labs, and they've been shown to accelerate weight gain.

You can enjoy delicious foods along with the health benefits of cutting back on sugar and salt. That includes lowering your blood pressure and LDL cholesterol, as well as reducing your risk of heart attacks, stroke, and other serious health issues.

Make a good start with these suggestions.

### Eating More Whole Foods

About 80% of the sugar and salt in your diet comes from processed foods. Switching to whole foods is a big change, but **you can succeed with one small step at a time.**

#### Try these techniques:

1. **Check your cabinets.** Put junk food out of reach. Remove it from your kitchen or store it on the highest shelves. You're less likely to give into temptation if it means driving to a store or taking out a step stool.

2. **Shop the perimeter.** Stick to the outer aisles at the supermarket. **That's where you'll find fresh produce and dairy products, instead of chips and candy.**
3. **Visit farmers markets.** Diversify your grocery shopping. Research farmers markets and ethnic shops in your neighborhood.
4. **Bring a list.** Reduce impulse purchases by planning what to buy before you leave home. Create menus for the week, so you'll know what ingredients you need.
5. **Dine at home.** Restaurants and manufacturers tend to use ultra-processed ingredients because they're tasty and cheap. Prepare your own meals and snacks. You'll also save a lot of money.
6. **Adjust recipes. Experiment with using less salt and sugar than the recipe calls for.** Taste your food before picking up the saltshaker to see how much you really need.

### **Other Ideas for Cutting Back on Added Sugar and Salt**

If you like the results you see so far, you may want to go further.

### **Make your diet even healthier with these simple strategies:**

1. **Taper down.** If you gradually reduce how much sugar and salt you add to foods, you may change your habits without even noticing any difference in the taste. For example, if you usually take your coffee with sugar, work your way down a quarter teaspoon at a time.

2. **Substitute other flavors.** Liven up your dishes with herbs and spices. To save money, you can grow many herbs indoors and buy products that will keep them fresh in the refrigerator for days.
  
3. **Read labels.** When you buy food in a box or bag, check the nutritional information. For example, frozen vegetables without sauce can be a wholesome time-saver.
  
4. **Drink water.** Quench your thirst with plain water rather than sweetened beverages. **If you like more flavor, add fruit or cucumber slices.**
  
5. **Increase your fiber.** Foods rich in dietary fiber help prevent cravings for sweet and salty snacks. Smart choices include vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.
  
6. **Sleep well.** Getting 8 hours of sleep each night fights cravings too, in addition to the many other health benefits. Go to bed early and wake up ready for a hearty breakfast.

**As you eat more whole foods, you're retraining your taste buds to prefer natural flavors.** You may soon like homemade whole grain pita chips more than pork rinds. You'll be increasing your chances for leading a longer and more active life by consuming less sugar and salt.