



January is “National Soup Month” and what’s better than a bowl of hot soup to warm you up on a cold winter day!

Be sodium savvy. If making your own soup, start with a low-sodium broth, stock, or soup base for the foundation. Experiment with flavorful herbs and spices, in place of salt, to add depth of flavor.

Make healthier choices when buying soup. Use the *Nutrition Facts Label* to help you choose soups with low sodium. Foods with **less than 140 milligrams (mg) of sodium per serving** can be labeled as low-sodium foods. Claims such as “low in sodium” or “very low in sodium” on the front of the food label can help you to identify foods that contain less salt.

Know your serving size. Most cans/cartons contain more than 1 serving, so be aware of how much you are eating! If it says 3 servings per can and you eat the whole can, you’ll have to multiply what’s on the *Nutrition Facts Label* by 3!

Make some healthy additions. Look for soups with at least **4 grams of fiber per serving** or boost the fiber and nutrient content yourself by adding some fresh, frozen, or leftover veggies to your soup as it cooks.

Best Bites. Avoid soups made with cream or cheese. Instead look for nutritious ingredients like kale, chickpeas, lentils, spinach, beans, quinoa, barley, brown rice and other vegetables and whole grains to boost the protein, fiber and nutrient profile of the soup.

Other Tips:

- Sodium is an essential nutrient. It is important for many body functions, but we are eating too much of it. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends limiting sodium intake to less than 2,300 mg per day – that’s equal to about 1 teaspoon of salt!
- Approximately 75% of our sodium intake comes from eating packaged or restaurant meals. Cooking at home & eating less processed foods can help us lower our sodium intake. When eating out, ask for your meal to be prepared without salt and request sauces and dressings to be served on the side.
- Potassium rich foods can help reduce the effects of a high sodium intake. Include bananas, potatoes, spinach, tomatoes and dark leafy greens in your diet more often.

Source: Adapted from Lisa Frazen-Castle, PhD, RD, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, *Healthy Bites Newsletter*, <http://food.unl.edu/healthy-bites-january-national-soup-month> Jan. 2006 and FDA. *Sodium*, <http://www.fda.gov/nutritioneducation>