

Low Sodium Snack Ideas to Increase Calories

Too much sodium (salt) in your diet makes you hold on to too much fluid. This fluid can collect in your hands, legs, ankles, belly, and lungs. Sodium comes from the salt shaker, but also in many foods you might not realize – even when you don't add extra salt.

Gaining or maintaining weight can be hard, especially when you are trying to watch your sodium. Snacking on the right foods throughout the day will help.

Low-Sodium Tips

- Aim for a daily intake of 2000 milligrams (mg) or less.
- Keep in mind that one teaspoon of table salt contains 2,300 mg of sodium.
- Avoid adding table salt, sea salt, kosher salt, or seasoned salts to foods during cooking or at the table.
- Try using herbs and spices like garlic, onion, basil, thyme, and oregano instead of salt (avoid salt versions of these like garlic salt).
- Read labels for sodium content. Here are some tips:
 - Choose side dishes or snacks with 140 mg or less sodium per serving.
 - Each meal should have 600 mg sodium or less.

Tips for Increasing Calories

- Eat more often. Try to eat 4 to 6 small meals or snacks throughout your day.
- If you don't feel like eating, a shake may be used in place of a meal or for a snack in between.
 - You can make your own homemade milkshakes or fruit smoothies with whole milk, yogurt, ice cream, instant breakfast, no-salt-added peanut butter, fruit, and/or milk powder.
 - You can also try drinks like Ensure®, Boost®, or Carnation Breakfast Essentials® (store brand varieties are often available and might be less expensive).
- Plan your meals around your energy level. For example, if you feel best in the morning, eat a big breakfast. Save shakes or other convenience foods for later in the day as you begin to feel tired.

Tasty Low Sodium Snack Ideas

Recipe	Calories per serving	Sodium per serving (mg)
Make your own trail mix: 1 cup unsalted popcorn, ¼ cup unsalted nuts, ¼ cup raisins, ¼ cup plain M&M's®	450	50
1 slice of bread, 2 Tbsp low sodium or natural peanut butter, ½ banana	300	200
Homemade fruit smoothie: 1 cup frozen strawberries, 1 frozen banana, ½ cup orange juice, 1 cup whole milk yogurt	330	140
Peanut butter crackers: 6 unsalted or low sodium crackers, 2 Tbsp low sodium or natural peanut butter	250	130
1 small bagel topped with 2 Tbsp cream cheese	260	280
6 low sodium Triscuits® with ½ an avocado	280	65
6 unsalted crackers, 3 oz. drained tuna (packed without salt), 1 Tbsp. Miracle Whip® Salad Dressing, 1 cup raw carrots	200	300
1 pack Carnation Breakfast Essentials® made with whole milk	280	200
1 cup pasta with 2 Tbsp olive oil, fresh herbs, and 1 oz. shredded mozzarella	450	170
¼ cup unsalted almonds with 1 carton of yogurt	300	50
1 cup whole milk Greek yogurt, ¼ cup strawberries, and ¼ cup granola	435	100
3 cups popcorn (about 2 Tbsp unpopped) made on stove with vegetable oil, 1 Tbsp unsalted butter, 2 Tbsp nutritional yeast for “cheesy” flavor	245	3

How to Read a Label

You should get in the habit of checking food labels for the most up-to-date information. Sodium is always on the food label. These steps will help you figure out how many calories and how much sodium is in a certain food:

1. **Number of servings and mg of sodium** – The label gives you the serving size and the number of servings in the package. The Nutrition Facts apply to the serving size listed on the label, not necessarily to the whole package. *For example, if the serving size is 1 cup and you eat or drink 2 cups, you will get twice as much sodium.*
2. **Look at the ingredients** – Be aware of products that list “salt,” “sodium,” and “monosodium glutamate” as one of the first five ingredients.
3. **Compare brands** – The sodium content of a particular food may vary from brand to brand. Be sure you are comparing similar serving sizes. Remember, those foods labeled as *reduced sodium* contain at least 25% less sodium than the regular variety. For example, a reduced sodium frozen entrée may have 600 mg sodium instead of 800 mg sodium in the regular version.

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	1 cup (227g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 240mg	6%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

What to Look for on Food Labels

There are laws that regulate what certain words and phrases mean on the front of food labels. The table below explains what food companies are allowed to say. Remember to check the Nutrition Facts label to make sure you are eating the correct serving size to stay within these limits.

Label Term	Meaning
Sodium-Free	Less than 5 mg of sodium per serving
Very Low Sodium	35 mg or less of sodium per serving
Low Sodium	140 mg or less of sodium per serving
Reduced or less sodium	At least 25% less sodium than a serving size of the original product
Unsalted, no salt added, without added salt	May contain sodium as a natural part of the food, but no additional sodium or salt is added during processing

Foods to Avoid

Some foods are very high in sodium. You should avoid these foods in your diet as much as possible. There are reduced sodium versions of some these products, but these may still be high in sodium - check the labels!

Processed deli meats	Salt pork
Sausage	Fat back
Bacon	Regular salad dressings
Hot dogs	Salt
Canned meats	Bouillon
Smoked or cured meats (pepperoni, salami, etc.)	Seasoning salts
Breaded meats, fish, poultry	Soy sauce
Processed cheese products (Cheez Wiz®, Velveeta®, etc.)	Worcestershire sauce
Pickles	Regular canned soups
Canned vegetables and vegetable juices that are not “reduced sodium” or “no salt added”	Dry soup mixes
Olives	Frozen meals
Biscuits	Fast food
Salted snack foods (pretzels, etc.)	Canned tomato products, spaghetti sauce, tomato, or V-8® juice