

## Ask the Expert:

### Should You Reduce Your Sodium Consumption?

Written by Emma Araya, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics '26

One way to improve health in the long-term is to avoid having high blood pressure or hypertension. Although sodium is a very important nutrient that we all need, eating too much sodium can directly increase blood pressure. Sodium is found in table salt and in many common foods. Many governmental agencies and organizations like the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) have been trying to lower the amount of sodium Americans consume.

Too much sodium can make your body hold on to water in your blood and put more pressure on blood vessels. Having high blood pressure is a risk for cardiovascular disease, heart attack, and stroke. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans currently recommends 2,300 milligrams of sodium per day or less.

Some ways to lower sodium intake are to:

- Try eating less cold-cuts of meats. Many cold-cuts like ham have a lot of sodium for flavor and to keep the food fresh. Try to find cold-cuts that have lower amounts of sodium or no sodium.
- Look at the nutrition label for sodium when choosing to buy sauces and dips at the store. Many packaged foods contain a lot of sodium. Making sauces and dips at home can be another way to lower sodium because you can control the amount of salt that you add.
- Try switching from salt to other ingredients. For example you can try using things like ....lemon, garlic, spices, and salt-free seasoning.

It's important to note that sodium is a very important nutrient to keep the body working as it should. Sodium is an essential mineral and electrolyte that helps the body balance fluids and helps muscles and nerves function.



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## Food Safety: What Is A Food Recall?

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There are two main groups in the United States that make sure the food we buy is safe: The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) regulates meat, poultry, and egg products and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates all other food products. These two agencies are also the ones that tell the public about food recalls in the United States.

A food recall is a message put out to the public to tell them when a food product has been mislabeled. Food recalls are an important way to make sure that the foods Americans can buy are safe. When a food product is recalled, the company that made the food will need to tell the public about the problem which could include things like being at risk for a foodborne illness, containing an allergen, or having glass, metal, or something toxic within the food. Also, the recalling company will tell the public to avoid eating the product and what to do when the product has already been bought or eaten.

For food recall updates, visit <https://www.fda.gov/safety/recalls-market-withdrawals-safety-alerts>



Sources: <https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/food-recalls-what-you-need-know>  
<https://nationalaglawcenter.org/food-recalls-what-are-they-and-how-do-they-work/>

## Watermelon Gazpacho

### Directions

1. In a small bowl, mix 1 cup of cubed watermelon and 1/2 of chopped cucumber; set aside.
2. Add the rest of the ingredients in a food processor or blender until smooth.
3. Transfer all ingredients to a large bowl and stir.
4. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Enjoy!

### Ingredients (4 servings)

- 4 cups cubed
- 1 cucumber, peeled
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons chopped onion
- 2 teaspoons lime juice
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/2 jalapeño pepper, seeded and chopped (optional)



### Nutrition Facts (per serving)

Calories: 70  
 Protein: 1g  
 Carbs: 13g  
 Fat: 2g

**\*foods included in the  
 TEFAP (The Emergency Food  
 Assistance Program)**

Sources: <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/watermelon-gazpacho>

## Eating Right: What is the DASH Eating Plan?

Written by Emma Araya, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics '26

There are many eating plans and ways of making a diet. One is the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension or the DASH diet. This eating plan gives guidance to people who have high blood pressure or who want to lower their risk of high blood pressure, known as hypertension.



The DASH eating plan focuses on lowering sodium and increasing nutrients that help lower blood pressure like potassium, calcium, magnesium, protein, and fiber. The eating plan places an emphasis on a diet that has a lot of fruits, vegetables, fat-free or low-dairy products, fish, poultry, and beans and nuts. The eating plan also limits fatty meats (pork, lamb, beef), full-fat dairy products, sweets and sugar-sweetened drinks.

If you are interested in learning more about the DASH eating plan or following the DASH eating plan, the Mayo Clinic offers a three day sample menu. Visit here <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/dash-diet/art-20047110>

Sources:

<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/education/dash-eating-plan>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/dash-diet/art-20047110>

[https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/sites/default/files/publications/WhyDASHWorks\\_UpdateNov20.pdf](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/sites/default/files/publications/WhyDASHWorks_UpdateNov20.pdf)



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This newsletter is edited by Emma Araya and Heather A. Eicher-Miller, PhD and is created by the Eicher-Miller Lab in the Department of Nutrition Science at Purdue University. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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IN THE NEWS

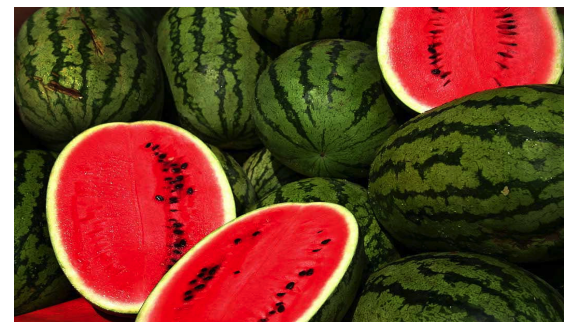
## In The News: August 3rd is National Watermelon Day!

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August 3rd marks national watermelon day, a day to celebrate watermelon and how it has become a popular fruit in the United States. Watermelon is served in school lunches, during the summer growing season, and is also often served at holidays like the Fourth of July.

Watermelon has many benefits, one of them being hydration. Watermelon is made up of about 92% water so it makes it a great snack when you are feeling tired or a little dehydrated. It also contains many vitamins and minerals like vitamin C and vitamin A. Vitamin A is important for skin and eye health and vitamin C helps the immune system become stronger.

You can enjoy watermelon many ways. Try it plain, adding it to a fresh fruit or vegetable salad, or grilled alongside chicken or meat.



Sources: <https://feedoc.org/stories/natl-watermelon-day/> <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/the-wonders-of->