

BOTTOM LINE Women's Health

■ VOLUME 2
■ NUMBER 11
■ NOVEMBER 2008

THE BEST OF MAINSTREAM AND NATURAL MEDICINE

ASK A MEMBER OF OUR ADVISORY BOARD

Is it smart to avoid salt as a general rule even if my blood pressure is fine?

Most people don't need to give up salt entirely but would be wise to limit intake. Sodium does contribute to high blood pressure and fluid retention, which force your heart to work harder and increase risk for heart attack and stroke. For healthy young adults, the recommended daily limit is 2,300 mg of sodium—that's just one teaspoon of salt. African-Americans, who are more prone to high blood pressure, and anyone who is middle-aged or older (or who already has high blood pressure) should stay under 1,500 mg—about two-thirds of a teaspoon per day. *Strategies:* Avoid processed and canned foods unless labeled "low sodium." Use herbs instead of salt to add flavor to foods. Ban the saltshaker—or at least fill it with a mix of salt, pepper and other seasonings.

NUTRITION

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