

Sodium in Drinking Water

Is there a health concern?

Sodium is a naturally occurring compound often found in groundwater. While our bodies need a small amount of sodium to be healthy, excess sodium intake may present a concern for persons on a low sodium diet or for persons suffering with hypertension, renal or heart disease.

How much salt is in our diet?

The Ontario Drinking Water Standards has established an aesthetic objective of 200 mg/L of sodium in drinking water; a concentration at which it can be detected by a salty taste. To put this in perspective this is a fraction of what most people consume in a typical diet. For example, a diet soda could have anywhere from 20 - 70 milligrams of sodium and processed foods like pasta sauces, soups, deli-meats, and restaurant meals all can have high sodium content. Sodium is even in foods that don't taste salty like bread, breakfast cereal, and baked goods.

What can you do to lower the salt content in your drinking water?

Water treatment methods such as distillation or reverse osmosis will lower salt content. Sodium is not removed by pitcher type filtration units or boiling. Note that the use of some domestic water softeners increases the sodium level in drinking water. It is recommended that a separate water line, that bypasses the water softener, be retained for cooking and drinking purposes.

Concerned about your sodium intake?

1. Users of a drinking water supply with sodium concentrations greater than 20 mg/L may wish to contact a health care provider if they are on a sodium restricted diet.
2. Choose food products lower in sodium.
3. Consult a drinking water treatment specialist for sodium removal options.

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