

## Session 1: Salt and health

### Learning outcomes:

At the end of the session the group should:

- know that salt in food can affect blood pressure
- know what happens when you get your blood pressure checked
- know that they should eat less salt
- be able to list foods that are high in salt
- be aware of the health benefits of eating less salt
- have taken part in physical activity.

### Activities and resources:

Activity	Preparation	Resources
Questions assessing knowledge about salt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Print off copies or photocopy salt quiz</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salt quiz sheets (page 270)</li> <li>• Pens</li> </ul>
Salt is bad for you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photocopy or print off heart attack and stroke pictures in colour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heart attack and stroke pictures (page 272-273)</li> </ul>
How do you measure your blood pressure?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite a nurse to demonstrate how blood pressure is measured</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nurse and blood pressure cuff</li> </ul>
How to keep blood pressure healthy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photocopy or print off doctor, pressure cuff and salt pictures in colour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doctor, pressure cuff, table salt pictures (page 274-276)</li> </ul>

Activity	Preparation	Resources
Which foods are high in salt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Print off the photos of table salt, salt cellar, tinned/plate of soup, ready meals, bacon, pot noodles, hot dogs and crisps in colour. You may choose to matt laminate these.</li> <li>• Prepare a flip chart with the title 'These foods have lots of salt'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photographs of table salt, salt cellar, tinned/plate of soup, ready meals, bacon, pot noodles, hot dogs and crisps</li> <li>• Flip chart and pen</li> </ul>
Cutting down on salt in cooking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buy some salt</li> <li>• Print off photos of or buy onions, herbs, mustard, lemon juice, garlic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salt</li> <li>• Photos of or buy onions, herbs, mustard, lemon juice, garlic</li> </ul>
Taste and try	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check risk assessment for food allergies/ preferences</li> <li>• Make up servings of low-salt crisps, salty crisps, dried fruit, digestive biscuits and rich tea biscuits. All can be served on paper plates</li> <li>• Label plates crisps A, crisps B and make sure you know which is which</li> <li>• Print off taste and try activity sheets (pages 277-278)</li> <li>• Prepare flipchart for exercise. See page 253 for more detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tablecloth</li> <li>• Disposable plates</li> <li>• Labels</li> <li>• Salty crisps</li> <li>• Low-salt crisps</li> <li>• Dried fruits</li> <li>• Digestive biscuits</li> <li>• Rich tea biscuits</li> <li>• Flip chart and pens</li> </ul>

Activity	Preparation	Resources
Physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check the risk assessment sheets to make sure that groups can do the exercise that is suggested</li><li>• Plan out a walk to do with the group</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ‘You can do it’ from <a href="http://vimeo.com/21292481">http://vimeo.com/21292481</a></li><li>• Find out if your local authority has activities or facilities that you can access</li></ul>

## Session 1 Salt and health

### Questions assessing knowledge about salt

The purpose of this exercise is to:

- Find out the group's existing knowledge about salt.

Hand out the salt quiz (page 270) and a pen to each group member.

- Ask the group one question at a time.
- Ask the group to tick beside the picture/s they think are the answers.
- Collect in their answer sheets, to be used again at the end of the salt topic to find out if they have learned from the sessions.

### Salt is bad for you

The purpose of this exercise is to:

- know that salty food can affect blood pressure
- know what happens when you get your blood pressure checked
- know that they should eat less salt
- be aware of the health benefits of eating less salt.

Ask the group:

What happens if you eat too much salt?

**Answer:** It can make your blood pressure high.

Your heart pumps blood around your body. The force which pumps blood is called blood pressure. High blood pressure can damage blood vessels and makes them likely to block.

- A block in the heart can cause a heart attack.
- A block in the head can cause a stroke.

Show the pictures of heart attack and stroke (page 272-273).

High blood pressure can also affect the kidneys. You have two kidneys. Show group where they are by pointing on your body – on either side of the spine, just below the rib cage. Your kidneys act like a sieve. They keep some things in your body that you need, and get rid of other things that you don't.

## **How do you measure your blood pressure?**

Invite a nurse to demonstrate how blood pressure is measured. An option is for a group leader to volunteer to have their blood pressure checked. It is not advisable to measure the blood pressure of any of the group members.

Ask the group:

Has anyone had their blood pressure checked before?

How did it feel?

Was it sore?

If a nurse is not available then explain to the group:

- a cuff is placed around the arm and “start” is pressed on the blood pressure monitor
- the cuff fills with air and becomes tight on the arm – this should not be sore
- the cuff slowly releases air until a blood pressure reading is picked up
- the average blood pressure is 120/80 mmHg (millimetres of mercury) and should be below 140/85
- if it is too high, the doctor will firstly suggest a healthier diet and more exercise, and then medication might be needed.

## How to keep blood pressure healthy

The purpose of this exercise is to:

- know that salt in food can affect blood pressure
- know that they should eat less salt.

Ask the group:

What can you do to keep your blood pressure right?

Answers:

- Eat less salt.
- Do not shake salt on your dinner.
- Use herbs instead of salt.
- Avoid foods that contain salt.
- Ask your doctor to check your blood pressure.

Show doctor, pressure cuff, table salt pictures (page 275-276) to demonstrate your points.

These also help keep a healthy blood pressure:

- Do not smoke.
- Try to keep a healthy weight.
- Eat fruit and vegetables.
- Do not drink lots of alcohol.
- Do more exercise.

## What foods are high in salt?

The purpose of this exercise is to:

- be able to list foods that are high in salt.

Lay the photos out on a table where all can see or if the group is small enough you can give each learner a photo.

Ask the group:

Which items are high in salt?

Invite the learners to stick the photographs on the prepared flipchart 'These foods have lots of salt'.

Answer:

- Table salt.
- Salt cellar.
- Tinned/plate soup.
- Ready meals.
- Bacon.
- Pot Noodles.
- Tinned hot dogs.
- Crisps.

In general foods that contain most salt are tinned, smoked, readymade foods – these foods are bad for you.

## **Cutting down on salt in cooking**

The purpose of this exercise is to:

- know that they should eat less salt
- be able to list foods that are high in salt.

We want to give you some new ideas on simple alternatives to use less salt in cooking.

Ask the group:

How much salt would you normally add to potatoes or vegetables when cooking?

Advise using no salt or only a pinch of salt. Show what is meant by a pinch of salt.

Suggest other foods which can be used to make food tasty and show pictures of actual foods:

- Onions.
- Herbs.
- Mustard.
- Lemon juice.
- Garlic.

Note: Low-salt products are not recommended because they have a different salt which can be bad for you.

## **Taste and try**

The purpose of this exercise is to:

- know that foods high in salt can affect blood pressure
- know that they should eat less salt
- be able to list foods that are high in salt
- be aware of the health benefits of eating less salt
- have taken part in physical activity.

Explain to the group that we are going to have fun tasting foods which are either low or high in salt.

Split into discussion groups of 3–4 people. Groups can call themselves a fun name if they wish to.



Give the following instructions:

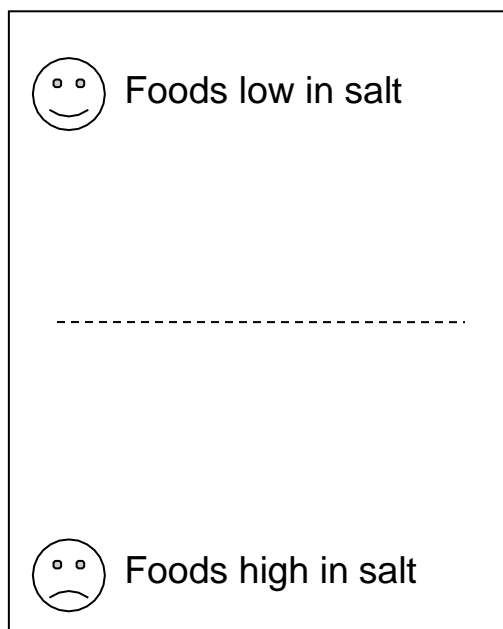
- You will all be taste testing a variety of different foods and drinks.
- Each food type you taste will have 2 versions, one with salt and one with no salt or much less salt.
- When you have tasted each version, have a chat in your groups and decide which one was low in salt and which one was high in salt.
- Give out taste and try salt activity sheet (page 277-278). Explain once you have decided whether it is high in salt or low in salt. you can draw, write or put the cup on either the high in salt page or low in salt page.
- When you have tasted everything and decided on your answers we will come back together as a large group and discuss what everyone thought.

Bring out the foods to be tasted. We suggest the following but you could add your own:

Low-salt crisps	- Serve on a paper plate
Salty crisps	- Serve on a paper plate
Dried fruit	- Serve on a paper plate
Rich tea biscuits	- Serve on a paper plate
Digestive biscuits	- Serve on a paper plate

For large group discussion:

- Prepare flip chart like this



- Tear the flip chart off and place on table or floor where all in the group can see.
- Go through the foods and drinks tasted and discuss whether the groups thought they were high in salt or low in salt.
- Reveal the answers to the group and use the packets, cartons and containers left from the tasting exercise and put them on the flip chart in the correct place (high or low in salt) to demonstrate the answers.

Things to talk about when going through the answers:

- Low salt crisps are good and readily available to buy. They have lower salt than normal crisps.
- Dried fruits are low in salt and also provide fibre and vitamins.
- Digestives are high in salt a rich tea biscuit has less salt.

## Physical activity

The purpose of this exercise is to:

- have taken part in physical activity.

Encourage the group do some exercise. You could:

- go for a walk.

### **Suggestion:**

Why not ask the group what they would like to do for next time? If you have time you could watch the 'You can do it' SCLD video - <http://vimeo.com/21292481>) to get some ideas or talk to your local authority to find out if they run accessible physical activities.