Doctor Doctor, What is the Deal with Salt?

by Paula J. Jimenez

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Exactly why is it that when a study is released stating salt is bad for our bodies, another one arrives claiming the opposite. What and who particularly should we listen to? For numerous years, our mothers and fathers, medical doctors, nutrition experts have instructed us to moderate our salt intake or absolutely eliminate it from our meals. But really, can food pull through without having salt? We all know food is more enjoyable with salt. Imagine a juicy tomato without salt - not just the same eh?

Weâ€™ve heard numerous people whoâ€™ve cut down their salt intake to zero. In the past after I lessene my salt intake, Iâ€™d eat a meal at a friendâ€™s house who still made use of salt, and came to the realization I didnâ€™t miss salt whatsoever. But it also came with the awareness that salt used in foods seemed to kick food into higher, more alive mode. As an alternative to salt, I had become proficient in using different herbs to put flavor in my food.

A bit of background on salt: salt helped our ancestors to preserve food, thereby eliminating the need to travel over long distances in order to get food. Essentially, it stopped them from staying nomads, and contributed to the development of civilization. But wait, why is it getting vilified today?

Lately new research was published in the American Journal of Hypertension involving 6,250 men and women. The studyâ€™s summary uncovered there was clearly no solid data that decreasing salt consumption reduces the risk for heart attacks, strokes or death in people with regular or high blood pressure levels.

Intersalt was a significant study printed in 1988 that evaluated sodium intake with blood pressure level in people from 52 international research centers. The study found there was no relationship between sodium intake and high blood pressure. The truth is, the people who ate the most salt, about 14 grams each day, experienced a lower blood pressure level than the people who ate the smallest amount of salt, about 7.2 grams daily.

Cochran Collaboration, an international, independent, nonprofit health care research organization published a review of 11 salt reduction trials in 2004. This review was backed in part by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The review discovered that over the long term low salt diets, compared to normal diets, lowered systolic blood pressure (the top number in the blood pressure reading) in healthy people by 1.1 millimeters of mercury (mmHg) and diastolic blood pressure (the bottom number) by 0.6 mmHg. Thatâ€™s like a comparison of 120/80 to 119/79. Doesnâ€™t appear to be much does it?

So with all the details swirling inside your head, who do you believe? Canâ€™t say for certain eh? Doctor, who do we believe? Letâ€™s bear in mind studies can be compromised depending on just what the company that is paying it would like the study to go.

Now, words of advice, although not authoritative; try to go for natural salt rather than the typical table salt or processed salt. It is considered by many people that table salt can cause conditions which includes various forms of arthritis, the dreaded cellulite, kidney stones, gall bladder stones, and of course, high blood pressure. So to be safe, just use natural salts and moderate your use.

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