

# LOWERING SODIUM IN SCHOOL LUNCHES

The recommended maximum sodium intake for school-age kids is **between 1,500 and 2,300 milligrams (mg) per day.**










**Most children only need 1,000 to 1,500 mg** of sodium per day depending on age.

The chart shows an example of what a middle-school lunch could look like before sodium standards were added and a four-stage reduction to align with the sodium dietary reference intake established by the National Academy of Medicine.

Old School Lunch		Target 1 <1,360 mg		Target 2 <1,035 mg		Target 3 <710 mg		Target 4 <575 mg	
MENU ITEM	SODIUM	MENU ITEM	SODIUM	MENU ITEM	SODIUM	MENU ITEM	SODIUM	Menu Item	Sodium
Cheeseburger	470mg	Hamburger	260mg	Hamburger	260mg	Hamburger	260mg	Hamburger	260mg
Pickle	280mg	Pickle	280mg	Baked Beans (USDA Foods)	140mg	Baked Beans (USDA Foods)	140mg	Crunchy Baked Sweet Potatoes	35mg
Tater Tots	310mg	Baked Beans (USDA Foods)	140mg	Carrot Sticks	40mg	Carrot Sticks	40mg	Carrot Sticks	40mg
Ketchup	300mg	Carrot Sticks	40mg	Ranch Dip	270mg	Hummus	72mg	Hummus	72mg
Cookie	40mg	Ranch Dip	270mg	Cookie	40mg	Cookie	40mg	Cookie	40mg
Grapes	0mg	Cookie	40mg	Grapes	0mg	Grapes	0mg	Grapes	0mg
Low-Fat Milk	110mg	Grapes	0mg	Low-Fat Milk	110mg	Low-Fat Milk	110mg	Low-Fat Milk	110mg
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1510mg</b>	Low-Fat Milk	110mg	<b>Total:</b>	<b>860mg</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>662mg</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>557mg</b>
		<b>Total:</b>	<b>1140mg</b>						

## TIPS FROM SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE DIRECTORS

The difference between Target 2 and Target 3 is 325 mg, similar to the amount saved by switching from a commercially-prepared version of baked beans to a USDA Foods version or from tater tots with ketchup to baby carrots with ranch dip.

	Estimated Sodium Savings (mg) per Serving		Estimated Sodium Savings (mg) per Serving
 Serve a <b>HAMBURGER</b> instead of a cheeseburger	210	 Serve <b>CARROT STICKS</b> instead of a pickle	240
 Swap <b>FROZEN</b> for canned vegetables	180	 Serve <b>BABY CARROTS WITH RANCH DIP</b> instead of tater tots with ketchup	300
 Use <b>MOZZARELLA</b> instead of American cheese	100	 Switch from regular to <b>USDA FOODS VEGETARIAN BAKED BEANS</b>	295
 Add <b>"NO SALT ADDED" DICED TOMATOES</b> to tomato soup	160	 Serve an <b>UNBREADED CHICKEN PATTY</b> instead of a breaded patty	120
 Add <b>HERBS AND SPICES</b> to rice instead of margarine or salt	220		

This illustrates some quick swaps that could be done to decrease sodium in school meals. Since the sodium standard is weekly instead of a daily limit, it allows flexibility to offer a variety of foods—such as cheese—throughout the week.