

Health Objective: HDS-2 Coronary Heart Disease Deaths
California Department of Public Health (CDPH)

Movers and SALT Shakers: The Sodium Awareness Leadership Team

Issue:

According to medical experts, reducing salt intake by three grams per day could save as many as 8,800 lives in California each year,ⁱ and reducing sodium intake in the U.S. to 2,300 mg per day per person may save \$18 billion health care dollars and reduce cases of hypertension by 11 million.ⁱⁱ

Salt, at the levels present in the diets of most people, is probably the single most harmful substance in the food supply and Californians are eating too much of it! Our bodies need salt to function, but too much can be harmful especially to children, people 51 and older, and those of any age who are African American or have hypertension, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease. In fact, about 90% of US children ages 6-18 years eat too much sodium daily, and about 1 in 6 children has raised blood pressure, a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke.ⁱⁱⁱ

Intervention:

In April 2014, CDPH launched a statewide leadership workgroup - the **Sodium Awareness Leadership Team (SALT)**. The team established the overarching goal of reducing heart disease and stroke by fostering healthy eating, including reduction of sodium consumption, in California by June, 2020. One of SALT's major initiatives is to plan and implement a 2015 statewide Sodium Summit to address nutrition guidelines and prioritize sodium reduction strategies.

Impact:

CDPH recognizes that internal and external partnerships are critical to maximizing success and leveraging resources. SALT consists of members from several programs within CDPH, California Department of Education, California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), American Heart Association/American Stroke Association (AHA), County Health Departments, and others. Through successful partnerships, SALT has increased program efficiencies at CDPH by coordinating the efforts of three CDC grants that address obesity, diabetes, heart disease and stroke. SALT has also leveraged thousands of dollars in support of the 2015 Sodium Summit from AHA and partner members offering funding, staff time, and needed resources. CDPH leadership on the Sodium Summit will increase California's visibility to additional funders of this critical issue.

In less than one year, SALT has made great strides in promoting sodium reduction awareness statewide as highlighted below:

- Reached over 250 state employees through participation in CDPH's Public Health Week Showcase. SALT members provided educational materials and fact sheets on cardiovascular disease and stroke, hypertension, and sodium reduction.
- Launched the Sodium Summit planning committee and began planning the 2015 statewide summit.
- Reached over 45,000 Californians through social media outlets administered by CDPH, DHCS, and CDE. Developed social media messages using CDC's 2014 Vital Sign reports "Reducing Sodium in Children's Diets" and 2012 "Where's the Sodium." Messages were posted on DHCS Welltopia Facebook page (Nov. 2014) and CDPH Facebook page (Jan. 2015).

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Quotation:

“American Heart Association/American Stroke Association is excited to be part of the CDPH SALT task force to reduce sodium intake in California. This effort aligns with the AHA mission to raise awareness about excess sodium intake and its health impact.”

Sang-Mi Oh, MHA

Vice President

Multicultural Initiatives, Western States Affiliate

American Heart Association/American Stroke Association

ⁱ Bibbins-Domingo, K, Chertow, G., Coxson, P., Moran, A., Lightwood J., Pletcher, M. and Goldman, L. Projected Effect of Dietary Salt Reductions on Future Cardiovascular Disease. *N Engl J Med* 2010; 362:590-599. February 18, 2010.

ⁱⁱ Palar K, and Sturm R. Potential Societal Savings from Reduced Sodium Consumption in the U.S. Adult Population. *Am J Health Promot.* 2009 Sep-Oct; 24 (1):49-57.

ⁱⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Control and Health Promotion, Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention. 2014.