



# ***Current Initiatives Canada: Food Labelling & National Task Force***



**Mary R. L'Abbé, PhD**

Director, Bureau of Nutritional Sciences  
Health Products and Food Branch  
Health Canada

PHAC/PAHO Observatory on  
Chronic Noncommunicable Disease Policy



Health  
Canada

Santé  
Canada



**Pan American  
Health  
Organization**

Regional Office of the  
World Health Organization

*Mobilizing for Dietary Salt Reduction Policies and Strategies in the Americas:  
Expert & Country Consultation (Miami, Florida, 13–14 January 2009)*



# Outline

- Sodium intake in Canada
- Nutrition labelling
- Sodium nutrient content claims
- Sodium health claims
- Front of package labelling
- Sodium in the *Food Guide*
- Sodium Working Group






# *Dietary Requirements for Sodium*

Age groups (y)	AI (mg/d)	UL (mg/d)
1 to 3	1000	1500
4 to 8	1200	1900
9 to 13	1500	2200
14 to 18	1500	2300
19 to 50	1500	2300
51 to 70	1300	2300
71+	1200	2300

- **Adequate Intakes** (AIs) for good health for people aged one year and over, range from 1000 mg/day to 1500 mg/day.
- **Tolerable Upper Intake Level\*** (UL\*) for sodium for people aged 14 and over should not exceed 2300 mg of sodium per day, (IOM, 2004).

\* UL is the highest intake level likely to pose no risk of adverse health effects.





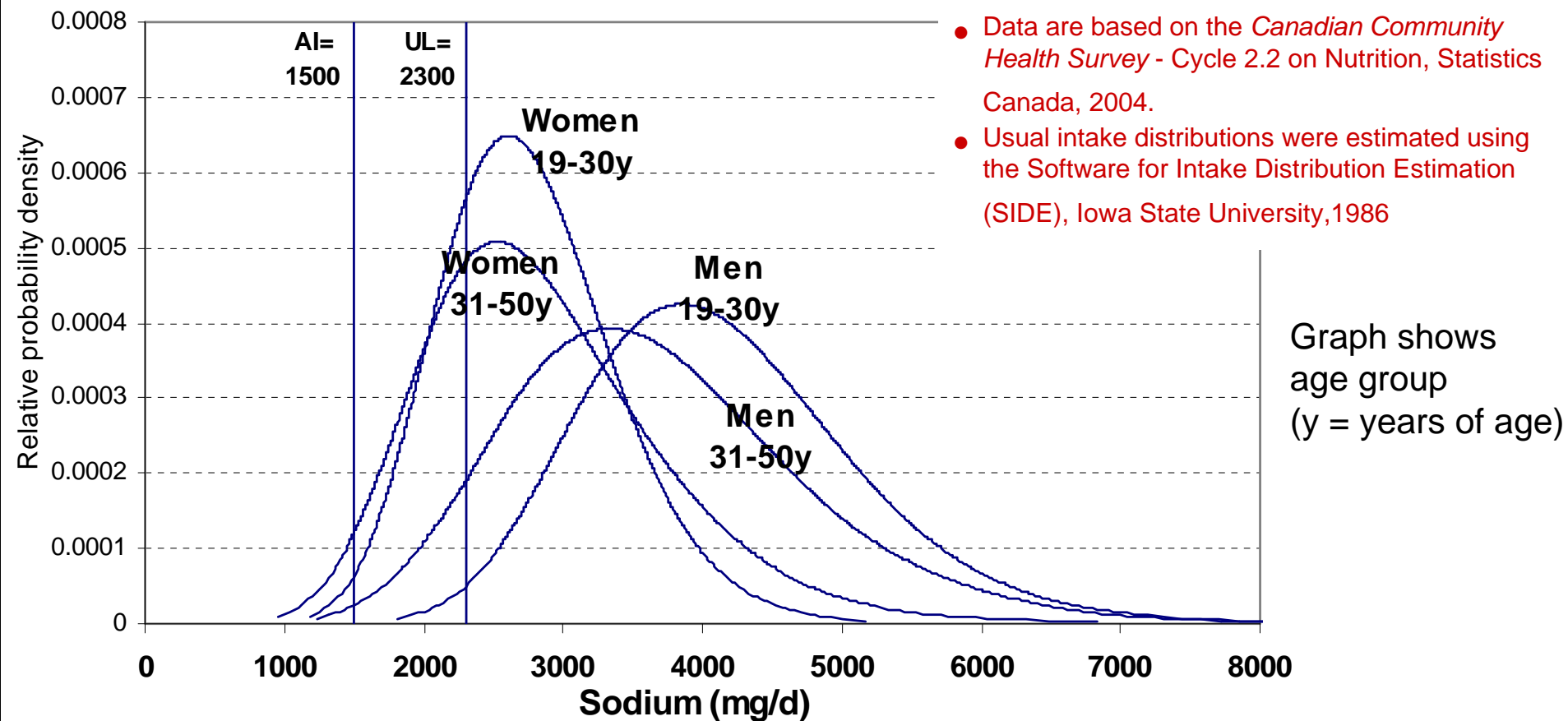
# *Sodium Intake in Canada*

- Canadians, aged 1+, consume on average about 3,100 mg per day of sodium (7.9 g salt) (CCHS 2.2, 2004)
  - Does not include salt added in cooking and at the table (an additional 10–15% of daily sodium intake)





# Usual Sodium Intake, Distribution for Men and Women



Age (y)	Men		Women	
	% above AI	% above UL	% above AI	% above UL
19 to 30	100	98.8	99.1	74.5
31 to 50	99.5	92.2	96.9	70.8



# Sodium intake in Canada <sup>1,2</sup>

From the 2004 Canadian  
Community Health  
Survey (CCHS 2.2) –  
Nutrition<sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Excludes salt added in  
cooking and at the table)

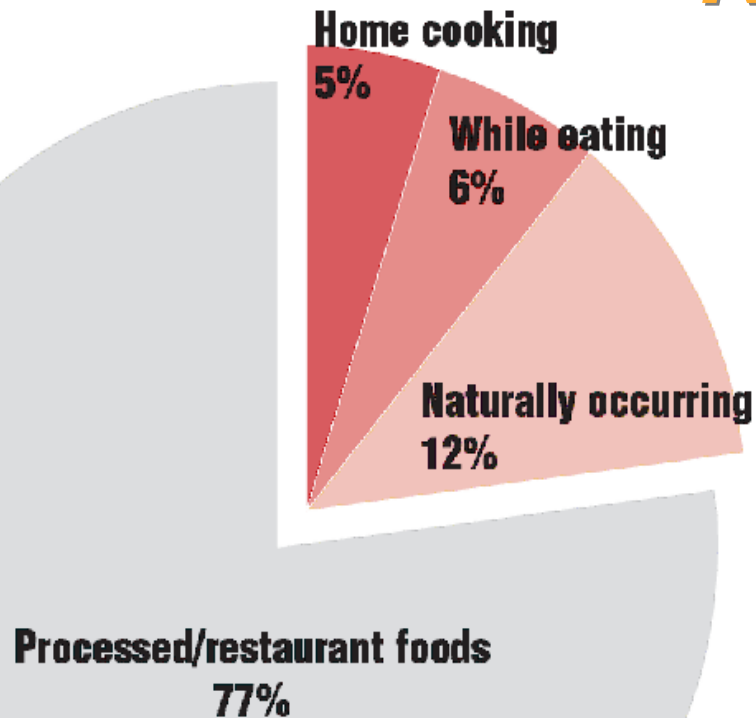
<sup>1</sup>Health Reports,  
Statistics Canada  
18(2): 47-52, 2007.

Age group (y)	Adequate Intake, AI (mg/day)	Tolerable Upper level, UL (mg/day)	Usual sodium intake by Canadians (mg)	% of population greater than UL
1 to 3	1000	1500	1903	76.8
4 to 8	1200	1900	2677	92.7
9 to 13	1500	2200		
Male			3555	97.4
Female			2962	83.4
14 to 18	1500	2300		
Male			4142	97.2
Female			2936	82.2
19 to 30	1500	2300		
Male			4083	98.8
Female			2743	73.0
31 to 50	1500	2300		
Male			3634	92.2
Female			2778	70.8
51 to 70	1300	2300		
Male			3345	85.8
Female			2587	63.7
>70	1200	2300		
Male			2874	76.7
Female			2294	44.2



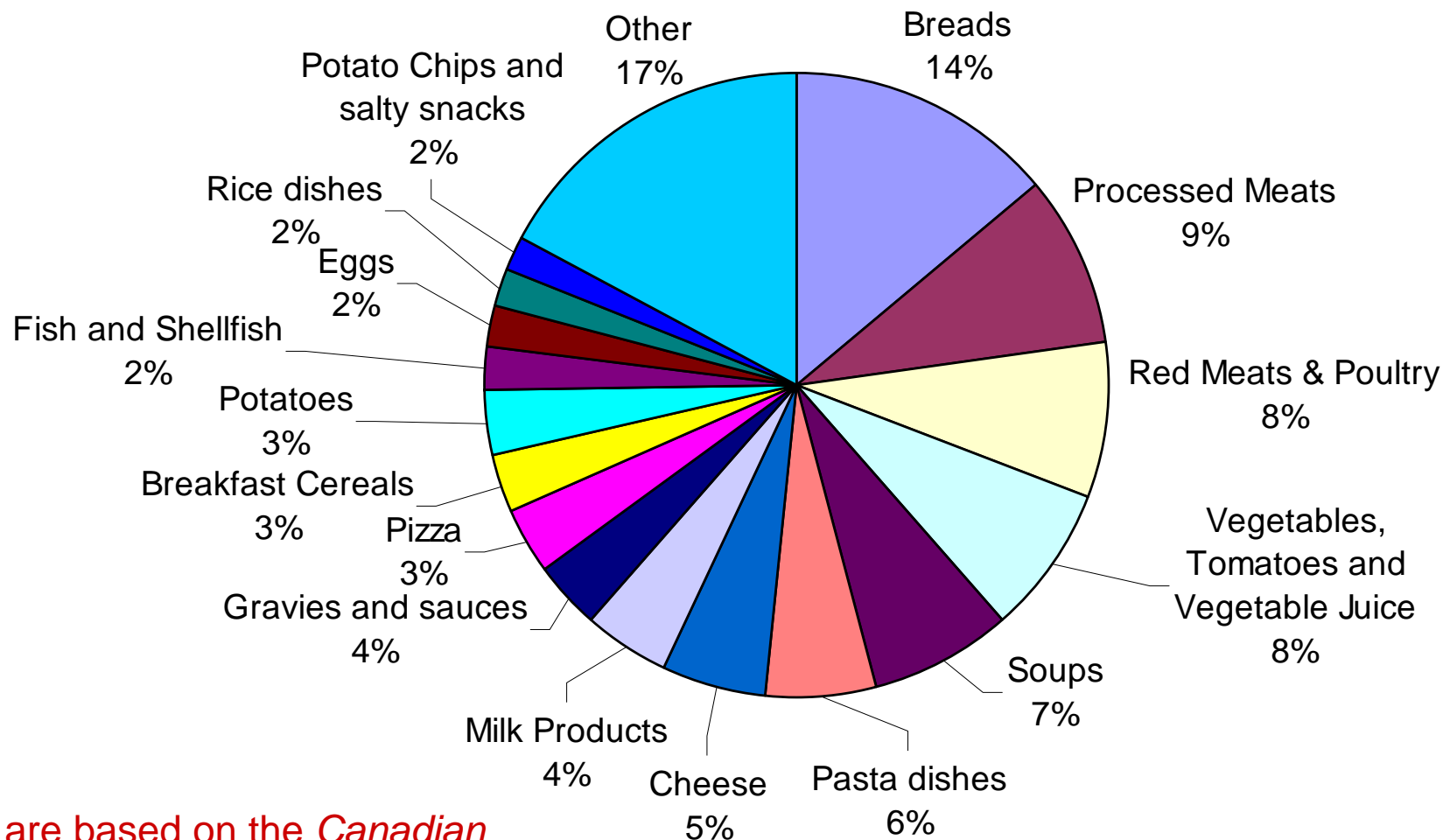


# *Sources of Sodium in the North American diet*



Sources of sodium found  
in the typical  
North American diet  
(Mates, 1991)

# Percentage of Total Sodium Consumed from Major Groups of Food Sources by All Respondents

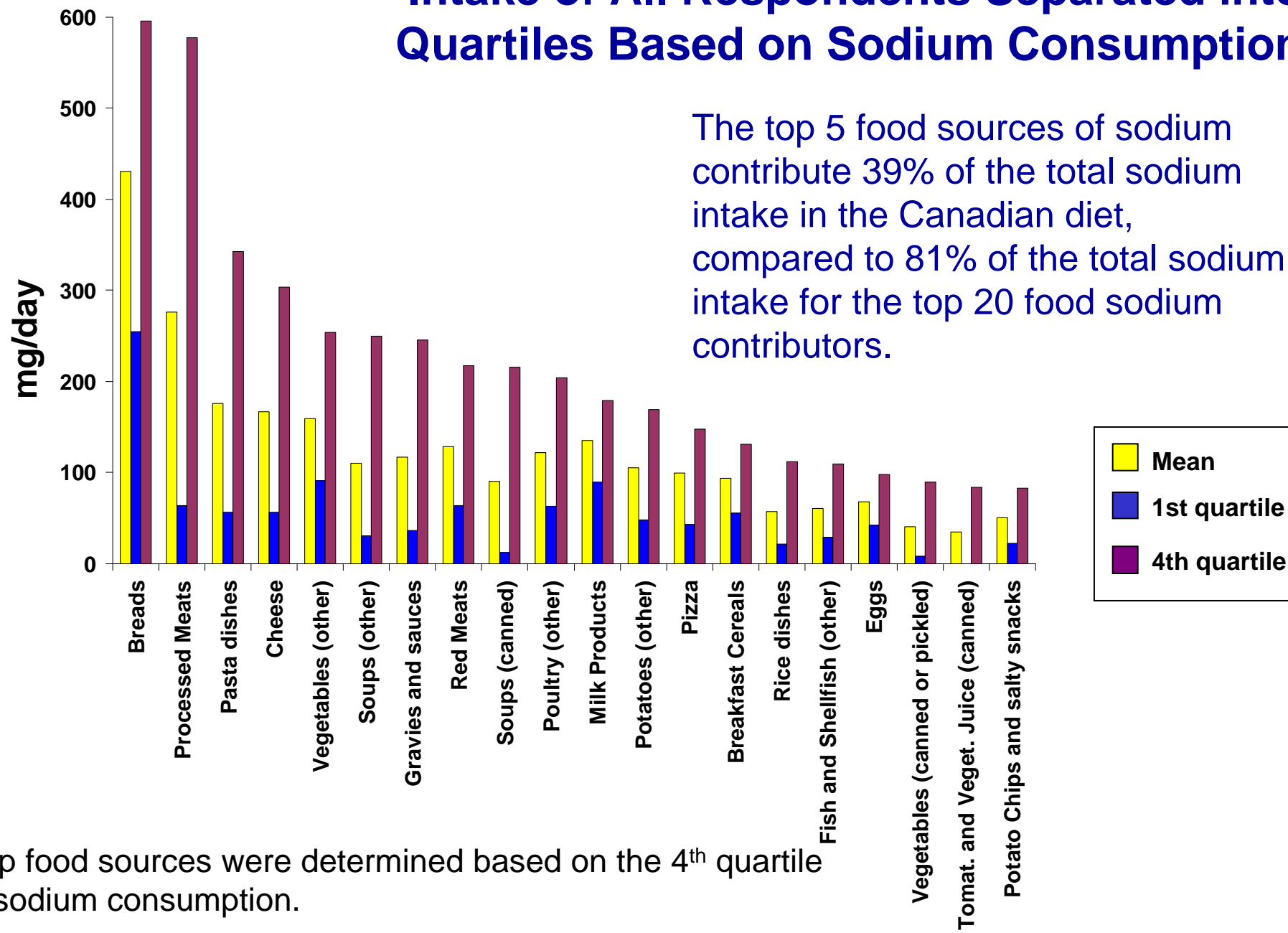


Data are based on the *Canadian Community Health Survey - Cycle 2.2 on Nutrition*, Statistics Canada, 2004.





# Top 20 Food Sources\* Contributing to Daily Sodium Intake of All Respondents Separated into Quartiles Based on Sodium Consumption

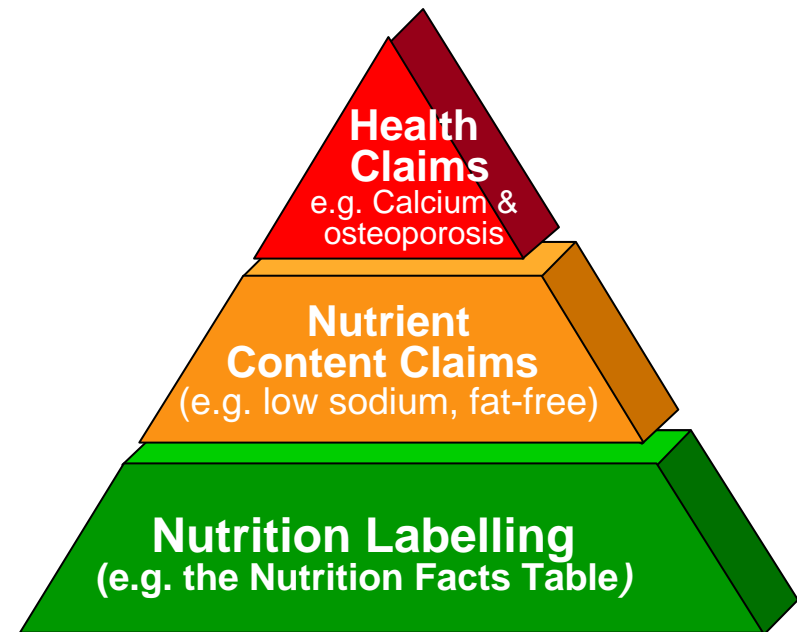


\*Top food sources were determined based on the 4<sup>th</sup> quartile of sodium consumption.



# ***Nutrition Information***

- A hierarchy of information about nutrition.
- To help consumers make food choices that will enhance health and reduce the risk of chronic disease.





# Nutrition Labelling

- Regulations Dec. 2002, effective 12 December 2005
- Mandatory on most pre-packaged foods, with some exemptions
- Calories and 13 core nutrients must always appear
- Additional nutrients must appear if subject of a claim
- **Sodium** one of the core nutrients

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Per 1 cup (264g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
<b>Calories</b> 260	
<b>Fat</b> 13g	<b>20%</b>
Saturated Fat 3g + Trans Fat 2g	<b>25%</b>
<b>Cholesterol</b> 30mg	
<b>Sodium</b> 660mg	<b>28%</b>
<b>Carbohydrate</b> 31g	<b>10%</b>
Fibre 0g	<b>0%</b>
Sugars 5g	
<b>Protein</b> 5g	
Vitamin A 4% • Vitamin C 2%	
Calcium 15% • Iron 4%	





## *Nutrient Content Claims re Sodium*

- Six nutrient content claims related to sodium are regulated in Canada:
  - “**salt-free**” (less than 5 mg of sodium per serving),
  - “**low in sodium**” (140 mg of sodium or less per serving), or
  - “**reduced in sodium**” (at least 25 percent less than the regular product)
  - “**lower in sodium**” (at least 25% less sodium)
  - “**no added sodium or salt**” (no added salt, other sodium salts or ingredients that contain sodium that functionally substitute for added salt)
  - “**lightly salted**” (at least 50% less sodium added than the sodium added to the similar reference food)





# *Health Claims re Sodium*

- Health Claim for Sodium


- A healthy diet containing foods high in potassium and low in sodium may reduce the risk of high blood pressure, a risk factor for stroke and heart disease
  - The food must meet the conditions for the subject “free of sodium or salt”, if the label of the food carries: “sodium-free”
  - The food must meet the conditions for the subject “low in sodium or salt” if the food carries: “low in sodium”

- Health Claim for Fats

- A health diet low in saturated and trans fats may reduce the risk of heart disease
  - **Conditions regarding sodium:** contains 480 mg or less of sodium per reference amount and per serving of stated size







## *Examples: Symbols in Front of Package Labelling Seen in Canada (not regulated\*)*

### Heart & Stroke Foundation's Health Check Program

➤ **New criteria effective Nov. 2010**

(e.g. **Breads** from 480 mg or less to 360 mg or less

**Cereals** from 480 mg or less to 240 mg or less,

**Vegetables** 480 mg or less to 240 mg or less,

**Canned tomato and vegetable juices and blends** from 650 mg or less 480 mg or less)



### Smart Spot™ Symbol Sodium Nutrition Criteria

includes limits for the amount of fat—including saturated and trans fats—cholesterol, **sodium** and added sugars (per serving)

Limits for sodium: **Beverages** (480 mg); **Foods** (480 mg); **Snacks** (270 mg)



Health  
Canada

Santé  
Canada

\*Many use the HC health claim disqualification level of 480 mg Na





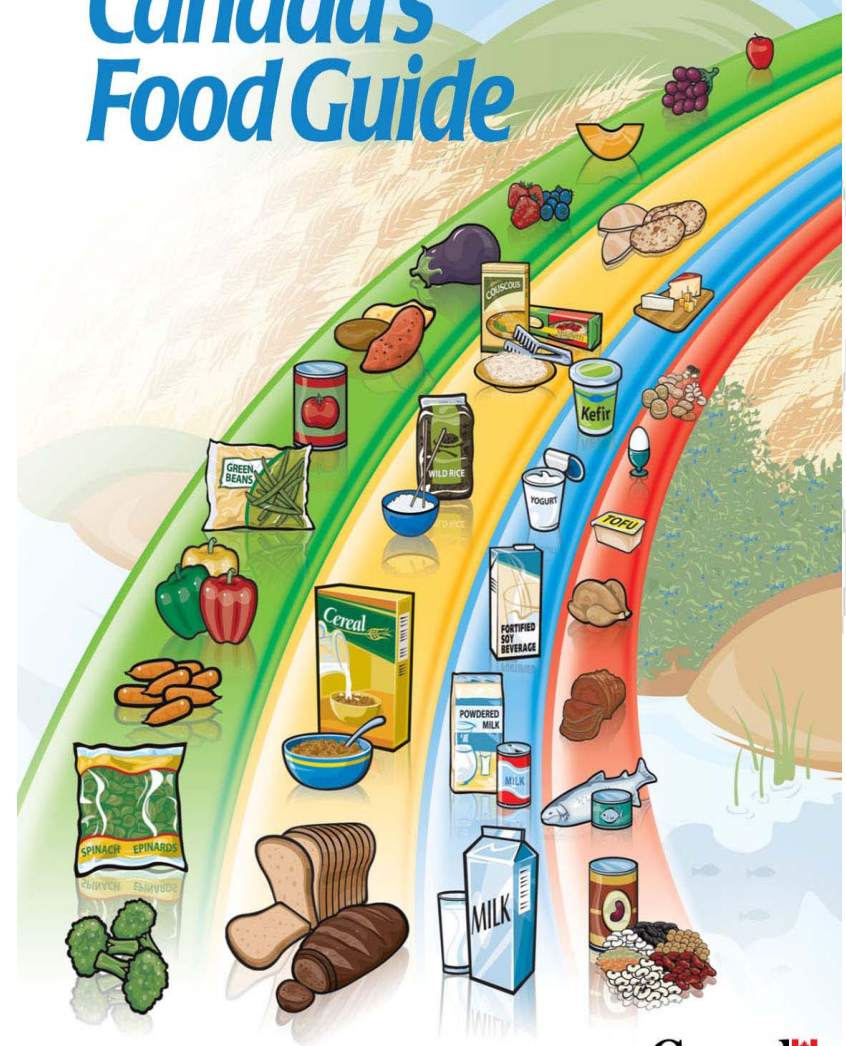
Health  
Canada

Santé  
Canada

Your health and  
safety... our priority.

Votre santé et votre  
sécurité... notre priorité.

## Eating Well with **Canada's Food Guide**



Canada

- Compare the Nutrition Facts table on food labels to choose products that contain less fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar and **sodium**
- Choose vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat, sugar or **salt**
- Choose grain products that are lower in fat, sugar or **salt**
- Select lean meat and alternatives prepared with little or no added fat or salt.
  - If you eat luncheon meats, sausages or prepackaged meats, choose those lower in **salt (sodium)** and fat.



Health  
Canada

Santé  
Canada



# ***Multi-stakeholder Working Group on Dietary Sodium Reduction (SWG)***

- **Formation of SWG:** Announced by Minister of Health October 2007
- **Mandate:** To develop, implement and oversee a population-health strategy for the successful reduction of the sodium content of the diets of Canadians
- **Strategy:** Develop, implement and oversee a strategy to reduce the overall consumption of sodium by Canadians through a three pronged approach:
  - Education/consumer awareness
  - Guided voluntary reduction of sodium levels in processed food products and foods sold in food service establishments
  - Research





# ***Multi-Stakeholder WG on Dietary Sodium Reduction***

- **Sodium Working group includes 24 representatives from:**

- **Scientific and Health-professional Community (5)**

- Canadian Institutes of Health Research
- Canadian Stroke Network
- Dietitians of Canada
- Blood Pressure Canada
- Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health

- **Health-focused & Consumer NGO (5)**

- Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada
- Canadian Council of Food and Nutrition
- Centre for Science in the Public Interest
- Extenso – Reference Centre for Human Nutrition
- Canadian Society for Nutritional Sciences

- **Food Manufacturing & Food service Industry (7)**

- Canadian Meat Council
- Food and Consumer Products of Canada
- Food Processors of Canada
- Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors
- Canadian Restaurant and Food Services Association
- Baking Association of Canada
- Dairy Processors of Canada

- **Government (6)**

- Office of Nutrition Policy and Development
  - Food Directorate
  - Federal-Provincial Territorial Group on Nutrition
  - Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
  - Canadian Food Inspection Agency
  - Public Health Agency of Canada
- 







# *Process Planned*

- **Assessment Stage: Ongoing**
- **Development of Strategic Framework**
  - Develop a Strategic Framework that includes goals, action plans to guide implementation and methods of assessment to determine success
  - Consult the wider stakeholder community (as needed) to seek input and/or commitment to action for dietary sodium reduction.
  - The approach will be evaluated for effectiveness and will include consideration of other policy options as required to achieve the goals.
- **Implementation Stage**
  - The Multi-Stakeholder Working Group will oversee implementation and monitor progress according to timelines and methods of assessment outlined in the Strategic Framework.





## *Next Activities of the Sodium Working Group*

- SWG meeting on 18–20 Feb 2009
- Public consultation session on 19 Feb 2009

Public Consultation on line open until 26 January 2009

*How to get involved:*

- Respond to on-line Questionnaire on Dietary Sodium Reduction at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/sodium/index-eng.php>. Ask to make a presentation to the SWG
- Attend the consultation as an observer
- Contact [sodium@hc-sc.gc.ca](mailto:sodium@hc-sc.gc.ca)





# *Thank you*



- Health Canada Website Links
  - The Issue of Sodium => <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/sodium/index-eng.php>
  - Sodium - It's Your Health => <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/food-aliment/sodium-eng.php>
  - Consultation session of the Multi-stakeholder Working Group on Dietary Sodium Reduction => <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/consultation/init/sodium/index-eng.php>
  - Sodium Questionnaire => [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/consultation/init/sodium/sodium\\_consult-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/consultation/init/sodium/sodium_consult-eng.php)

