

Consensus Action on Salt & Health

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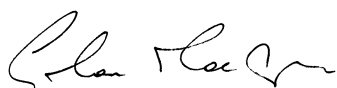
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Introduction from Professor Graham MacGregor, Chairman of CASH

We are working hard to bring about a reduction in the amount of salt in processed foods as well as salt added to cooking, and the table. This needs cooperation from the food industry, government, experts and consumers alike. So please pass on the message – Less Salt Please!

We hope you enjoy our newsletter.

Best wishes

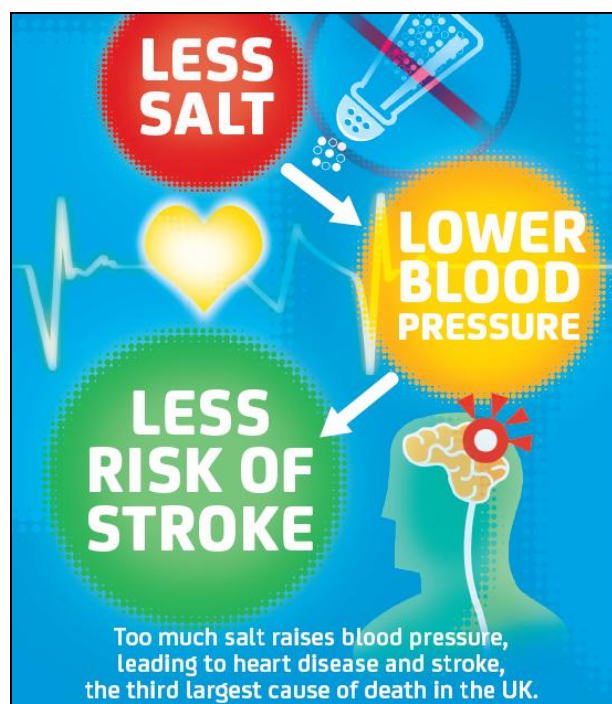


CASH News

We are pleased to welcome to the CASH team Professor MacGregor's Personal Assistant Kim Burns and two new expert CASH members; Simon Capewell, University of Liverpool, Professor of Clinical Epidemiology and Klim McPherson, University of Oxford, Visiting Professor of Public Health Epidemiology. Our new website, designed by the Queen Mary web team has been well received and since receiving a Google Grant, we are now able to promote it through free search optimisation. We are very grateful to The Marcela Trust and British Heart Foundation for their continuing support of CASH.

National Salt Awareness Week 2012

We are pleased to announce that Salt Awareness Week 2012 will take place between **March 26th – April 1st 2012** and the theme will be **Reducing Salt - Preventing Stroke.**



Proposed poster - open to suggestions!

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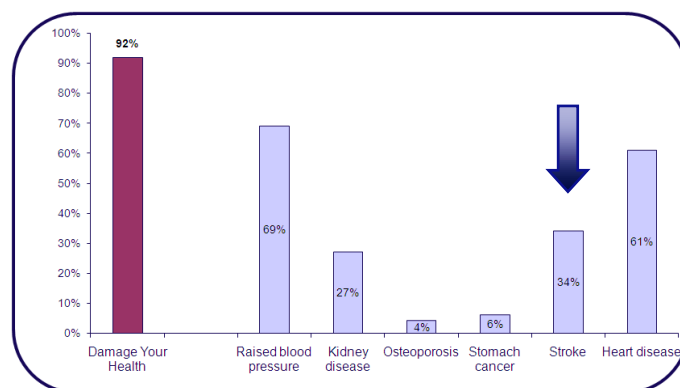
Salt and Stroke Prevention has been selected as the topic for Salt Awareness Week 2012 because salt is the major factor that raises blood pressure and high blood pressure is the single most important risk factor for stroke - responsible for 62% of strokes. Evidence also suggests a high salt intake may have a direct effect on stroke, independent on blood pressure.

Stroke is a leading cause of **severe adult disability** in the UK and the **third biggest killer** not only in the UK but worldwide. Of the estimated 150,000 strokes in the UK each year, about a third (43,000 – 53,000) die, a third will recover and a third are left with life-changing disabilities. Reducing average salt intake by just 1g/day can prevent at least 2,600 deaths from stroke *every year*, plus additional events that do not result in death.



CASH are pleased to announce that The Stroke Association have agreed to support the campaign. Our public opinion survey indicates that stroke is not seen as a major concern for most of the UK population and two-thirds are not aware of the link between salt and stroke (fig 1). It follows that few people will be taking preventive measures to reduce their risk. Coupled with the rise in stroke incidence as life expectancy increases, now is an opportune time for a campaign focused on raising awareness and encouraging the public and the food industry to take preventive steps against stroke.

Fig 1. Which of the following health conditions is linked to eating too much salt?



The campaign will aim to raise awareness in a number of ways: with posters and resources for health care professionals and other organisations; a product survey which relates particularly to those at higher risk of stroke; case studies describing experiences of stroke. CASH will again hold a Parliamentary Reception at the House of Commons.

Consumer action

We are helping the public speak up and ask for **Less Salt Please!** By

encouraging them to write to manufacturers and local restaurants if their food is too salty; ask for less salt

when eating out; and to let us know if they come across products that are high in salt. The consumer section of our website provides a resource for the public where they can find advice and a selection of recipes: our free downloadable recipe booklets [Low salt cooking for men](#) and [The International low salt cookbook](#) have been well received by consumers and experts alike.



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CASH in the News

CASH has continued campaigning to reduce salt in our foods with some major product surveys of foods which are eaten regularly and are responsible for a large proportion of the salt in our diets. We have continued to gain strong media support for our surveys, reaching millions of people.

Coffee shop treats ditch the salt. In October 2010, we exposed many coffee break products as being unnecessarily high in salt. One year on, some great progress has been made, demonstrating that manufacturers can easily take out the salt without affecting the taste. However, despite this great progress, 85% of the products contain the same level of salt as they did in 2010. McDonald's Low Fat Blueberry Muffin, positioned as a 'healthier' option, is now the saltiest coffee product surveyed, containing 1.7g salt.

The One Show. CASH had the opportunity to visit the BBC in Manchester and film a segment on salt for The One Show:



A local family was tasked with trying to reduce their salt intake and the piece included a 'Cornflakes' taste test comparing today's product with the original recipe, an interview with Kelloggs, a mention of why salt put into

our food and a mention of the Department of Health's Responsibility Deal. All of the family successfully managed to meet the maximum daily targets of 6g for adults or 3g for children.

The scandal of salty bread. CASH found high salt levels in loaves of bread with as many as 1 in 4 containing as much salt per slice as a packet of crisps. A Seeded Farmhouse from Cranks contains 2.03g salt per 100g (approximately 2 slices), nearly FOUR times more salt than the lowest salt packaged bread. Supermarket freshly baked bread tends to be higher in salt than packaged but currently has no labelling, making it impossible to make an informed choice.

The survey received extensive media coverage from programmes such as BBC News 24 and ITV's Daybreak, numerous radio stations including BBC Radio 4 as well as the major newspapers. We are very pleased to announce that on the back of the survey, PAULS announced a 14% reduction in the salt content of its breads, and several supermarkets announced labelling will become available on their in store bakery breads.

With bread being responsible for a fifth of our salt intake (NDNS), it is imperative that the food industry reduces the salt levels in bread beyond the 2012 target of 1g/100g. The Department of Health's targets play a central role in industry progress but disappointingly the DH has informed us that they will not be setting 2014 targets until they know how far salt intakes have been reduced in the UK to date.

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Salt in our Great British Bangers A serving of 2 sausages could contain nearly half your maximum daily recommendation of salt, putting your health at risk.



Richmond Skinless Sausages were found to contain 2.3g salt per 100g and only 7 out of 246 meat sausages contain less salt than a packet of crisps. Reducing the salt in sausages by 20%, from the 2010 to the 2012 targets, would remove 500 tonnes of salt from the UK diet per year – the weight of over 90 elephants!

Salt in the News

The Responsibility Deal

In March 2011 the Department of Health launched the **Public Health Responsibility Deal**. Companies signing up to the deal have pledged to **reduce salt in their foods by 15% over the next 2 years** to meet the 2012 salt targets. If all companies sign the pledge, this should result in salt intakes coming down by 1 gram from the current intake of 8.6g to 7.6g in 2012. CASH supports the deal and is urging all food companies, including suppliers, to [sign the pledge here](#).

The following companies have pledged to reduce salt:

Artizian, ASDA, Aldi Stores, Alliance Boots, Apetito, Associated British Foods, Association of Cereal Food Manufacturers, Aunt Bessies, Authentic Food Company, Bakehouse, Bella Italia Restaurants, Bennett Hay, Booker Group, Burton's Foods, Cafe Rouge Restaurant, CH&Co Catering, Compass Group, CASH, Co-operative Group, Costa, EAT., Elior UK, Ferrero, General Mills UK, Greene King, HJ Heinz Co, Indulgence Patisserie, Initial Catering Services (Autograph), ISS Facility Services, JD Wetherspoon, Kellogg's, Kettle Foods, Kraft Foods, Marks & Spencer, Mars, Marston's, McCain Foods, Midcounties Co-operative, Morrisons Supermarkets, Nestle, New Covent Garden Soup Company, OCS Group, Olive Catering Services, PepsiCo, Pizza Express Restaurants, Premier Foods, Pret A Manger, Produced in Italy, Punch Pub Company, Rodda's, Sainsbury's Supermarket, Samworth Brothers, 7 Day Catering, SkinniMalinx, Sodexo, Southern Cooperative, Strada Restaurants, Subway International, Tesco, Unilever, United Biscuits, Waitrose, Warburtons, Weetabix, Whitbread Group, YO! Sushi.

CASH congratulates these companies for their commitment and looks forward to hearing their progress.

In order to reach some of the 'more challenging' salt targets, retailers and manufacturers have commissioned independent research to identify suitable technological solutions. We hope that this collaboration will benefit the wider food industry and ultimately have a positive impact on Public Health.

A Pinch of Salt News



Takeaway meals found to contain a day's worth of salt and fat by a Local Government Group



NDNS finds bread is still the biggest contributor of salt to our diet, responsible for 18% of our intake



Consumers think that sea salt contains less sodium than table salt according to the American Heart Association and Cargill



More people concerned about salt (50%) than fat (44%), revealed FSA public attitudes tracker survey, food prices are still the greatest concern



Salt must be labelled under new EU legislation EU countries will have uniform labelling on pack within 5 years



Salt intakes remain static in Scotland finds the FSA, with no change since 2006

Science News

A low salt diet may benefit brain health in aging in those with low physical activity levels, according to a prospective study by Fiocco et al. The authors recorded the exercise levels and salt intake of 1262 elderly participants at baseline and examined their cognitive function annually for 3 years. They found that in the low exercise group, those with a low sodium intake displayed better cognitive performance over time than those with a higher sodium intake. [Click here for the paper](#)

Policy options to reduce population salt intake at a global level. In an analysis published in the BMJ, CASH members Francesco Cappuccio and Simon Capewell *et al* make the case for population level policy interventions to reduce salt intake. They enforce the importance, and highlight the cost benefits, of salt reduction and outline a clear and practical approach to a successful salt reduction campaign. [For the full BMJ article, click here](#)

70% of infants are eating too much salt. A study of 1178 8-month-olds, published in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, found 70% of infants consume more than the recommended maximum of 1g salt per day for children up to 12 months old; the highest quartile were fed an average of 2.65g per day. Inappropriate complementary feeding included; use of cows' milk as a main drink, bread, gravy and salty flavourings. Excess salt can be harmful to the development of the kidneys and may lead to the infant acquiring a taste for salty food. [Click here to read the paper](#)

A Cochrane Review claimed that salt reduction had no effect on cardiovascular disease, but a reanalysis of the same data proves this conclusion was wrong. In a controversial meta analysis of outcome trials published in both the *Cochrane Review* and the *American Journal of Hypertension*, Taylor et al claimed that while a modest reduction in salt intake lead to a small reduction in blood pressure, no effect on CVD risk could be seen and salt reduction therefore has no effect on these outcomes.



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Unfortunately, the flawed and misleading conclusions from the paper lead to damaging headlines in the press, with The Daily Express stating 'Now salt is safe to eat'.

These findings have since been refuted in a commentary in *The Lancet*. A new analysis of the same data shows a significant reduction in cardiovascular events; **stroke and heart attack risk fell by 20% with a reduction of only 2g of salt a day** in people with either high or normal blood pressure, reinforcing the overwhelming evidence for the benefits of salt reduction.

[Click here to read the Cochrane Review](#)

[Click here for the reanalysis in the Lancet](#)

Significant cost savings could be achieved by reducing salt and fat consumption. A modelling study published in the BMJ predicted that a reduction in salt intake by 3 g/day in England and Wales would prevent approximately 30 000 cardiovascular events, saving the NHS at least £40m a year. Even modest population-wide reductions in any major cardiovascular risk factor (e.g. salt) would lead to cost savings as well as improving health. [Click here to read the BMJ article](#)

A high sodium, low potassium diet increases risk of CVD death according to a US study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Yang et al followed a cohort of 12,000 participants for an average of 14.8 years and found a high sodium potassium ratio was associated with a significantly increased risk of CVD and all-cause mortality. The study adds weight to the existing smaller studies linking sodium and potassium intakes and CVD risk. [Click here for the full paper](#)

Nutrition in Cardiovascular disease: Salt in hypertension and heart failure. In a review published in *European Heart Journal*, the evidence relating salt intake to blood pressure, heart failure and total CVD was reviewed. Patients with heart failure were recommended should reduce their salt intake to less than 5 g/d, if successful there may be a need for a reduction in diuretic dosage. The authors note the cost effectiveness of salt reduction and call for each country to adopt a coherent and workable strategy to reduce salt intake in the whole population. [Click here to read the review](#)

Iodine deficiency in teenage girls and a call for supplementation via salt in The Lancet In a recent cross sectional survey of UK schoolgirls, Vanderpump et al showed that the UK may be iodine deficient and recommended population level iodine supplementation through salt iodisation. The survey measured urinary sodium in 810 schoolgirls and found that 51% were mildly iodine deficient. Maternal iodine deficiency can affect neurodevelopment in the fetus and cause mental impairment. Iodine deficiency is a potentially serious problem. Historically, iodisation of salt has been seen as the best way of overcoming this; however iodisation of bread, flour or cereals would be a better option to avoid the conflict in public health. WHO has agreed that the amount of iodine in salt needs to be increased in line with the salt reduction target of 5g per day for all adults. [Click here to read the paper](#)

[Click here for the CASH comment](#)

Upcoming conference. Raman Suri, Conference Director of Foodnews would like to invite friends of CASH to take advantage of a 10% discount to attend the Natural Sugar & Salt Replacer conference in London in November to discuss sugar and sodium reduction.



Topics include:

- The changing drivers for reformulation
- Exploring voluntary and Government approaches
- Natural salt replacers
- Improving flavour, shelf life and health profile
- EU regulation

Quote 'WOLFSON' to receive your 10% discount
<http://natural.agraevents.com/delegate-registration>
 or call Jamie Playford at +44 (20) 701 77584

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