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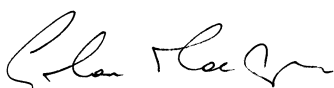
Science News

Introduction from Professor Graham MacGregor, Chairman of CASH

Despite recent reductions in our salt intakes to 8.1g, we are still eating too much salt. Salt puts up our blood pressure leading to strokes, heart attacks and heart failure, as well as contributing to a number of other serious health conditions such as osteoporosis, stomach cancer and kidney disease.

We are working hard to reduce the amount of salt we eat, with cooperation from the food industry, government, policy makers and consumers alike. Keep asking for 'less salt please'.

Best wishes



CASH News

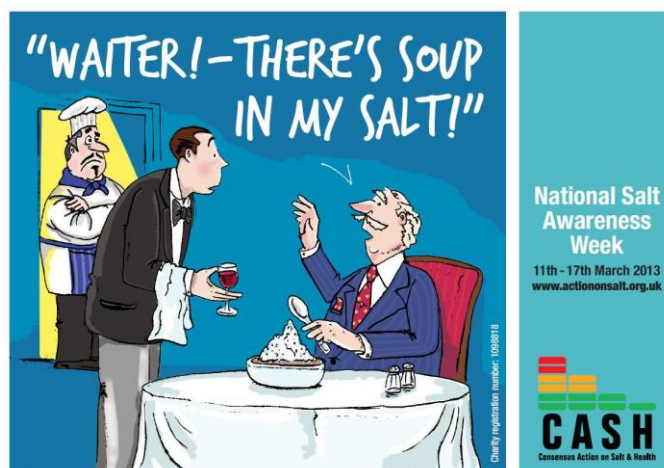
Welcome to the Summer newsletter from CASH. The future of the salt reduction programme in the UK faced great uncertainty as 2012 drew to a close. CASH have been working hard to ensure momentum is not lost during this turbulent period, and we thank all those involved for their support.

We have reluctantly said goodbye to our 'salt girl' Hannah Brinsden who, in her three years with CASH, was instrumental in progressing our work, in particular through the product surveys and educational materials. Hannah joins the International Association for the Study of Obesity and we wish her the best of luck. We are pleased to introduce nutritionist Kawther Hashem, who joined us at the end of August from Consumers International, as well as nutritionist Sonia Pombo, who joined us in January from Leatherhead Food Research.

We are thrilled to be able to announce the continuing support of the British Heart Foundation for our work on labelling, monitoring the food industry and driving reformulation.

Salt Awareness Week 2013

In March, CASH held our 14th National Salt Awareness Week, which was held on **Monday 11th – Sunday 17th March 2013.**





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This year, we asked for **'Less Salt Please'**, showing how everybody, including chefs, can use less salt and still enjoy the great flavour of their food.

We showed you how to take control of the salt in your own food preparation, by simply using less salty and more tasty ingredients, as well as adding less salt during cooking and at the table. However it is harder to eat less salt when eating food prepared by other people, such as chefs in restaurants, cafes, canteens, takeaway and fast food venues – not to mention recipe suggestions in cook books. These foods can contain a lot of hidden salt, and without labels on these products, it is very hard to make a healthier choice. We used this opportunity to highlight to the catering industry, chefs and others involved, the importance of adding less salt to our food and the long-term health implications of eating a high salt diet.

Get involved

Every year hospitals, GP surgeries, sports centres, pharmacies, schools, libraries, universities, councils, businesses, charities and other interested parties hold their own events to support Salt Awareness Week, and this year was no different, with more than 900 events taking place around the country during the week.

A total of 136,800 leaflets, fact sheets and shopping guides, and 1,800 posters were ordered in anticipation of Salt Awareness Week. We also received an overwhelming interest from pharmacies as a result of promotion within The Pharmaceutical Journal.



This year we were fortunate enough to have support from the following UK charities:



And with the support of the following companies, we were able to send all our leaflets and posters for free:



Parliamentary Reception

As part of Salt Awareness Week, CASH held a lunch time reception at the House of Commons on Wednesday 13th March 2013, hosted by MP David Amess, a great supporter of CASH and the work we do. The day was a great success, with over 100 guests attending the event.

Special guests Shadow Public Health Minister Diane Abbott and celebrity chef Raymond Blanc made some great speeches regarding their views on salt in the out of home sector, and the demand for more efforts to be made, along with CASH chair Professor Graham MacGregor, outlining the importance of health and salt.

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Raymond Blanc: *'Please don't jump on the salt box! don't murder your food with salt!'*

Diane Abbott: *'We live in a 'saltogenic' environment; too much of the food that people consume without thinking, has too much salt'*



Professor Graham MacGregor: *'60% of the public think there's too much salt in [restaurant] food. So the public are getting the message, and the chefs have got to listen'*

[Click here](#) for more photos and transcripts of the event.



A huge thank you to all those involved!

Less salt please!

In line with this year's theme, we have been encouraging the British population to speak up and ask for **'Less Salt Please!'**

Recent studies have shown that as a population we are adding less salt to our food at the table, which is great news! But we need to continue our efforts to bring the nation's salt levels to within recommended intakes. The Department of Health have been applying pressure on the food industry through the Public Health Responsibility Deal, and a great response has been met, with over 80 partners signed up to the salt reduction pledge. However this does not take into account foods consumed out of the home e.g. in restaurants. Until this is achieved, it is down to the nation to make themselves heard and demand less salt in their food.

We have been encouraging people to ask their waiter/chef to let them choose how much salt they'd prefer on their food when ordering. If you have a really salty meal - complain to the management. If you have a really low salt meal - compliment them!

CASH Investigates...

CASH has continued campaigning to reduce salt in our foods and have continued to gain strong media support for our food surveys, reaching millions of people.

New research reveals salt hidden in biscuits (June 2013)



Recent data from the UK's National Diet and Nutrition Survey 2011 show that 60% of 19-64 year olds regularly

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eat biscuits, and children are eating even more than adults, with 80% of under 10's reporting to consuming them on a regular basis. Our latest survey of 479 sweet biscuits from major supermarket chains found having sweet biscuits with the afternoon tea, or popping a couple in your child's packed lunch, could be adding more salt to your diet than you think.

With children eating as many as 46 packets of biscuits a year each, levels like this are likely to put themselves at a greater risk of developing high pressure in adulthood.

Although biscuits are generally considered a treat, NDNS figures demonstrate they are being consumed on a more regular basis. With nearly 90% of biscuits receiving an amber traffic light for salt, and over 90% being highlighted as red for sugar, this emphasises the need for further product reformulation in biscuits. Asda and Cadbury's announced they will have new, lower salt digestive biscuits on the shelves soon!

[Click here](#) for the full survey.

New research exposes the salt hidden in restaurant meals as national charities urge chefs to use less salt (March 2013)



Celebrity chefs exert great influence on people's food habits through their books, programmes and endorsements. To highlight the need for reductions in the out of home sector, CASH carried out a survey looking at the salt content of meals from celebrity chef restaurants, chain and fast food restaurants and cafes.

The survey looked at 664 main meals from 29 popular high street and celebrity restaurants, fast food and café chains. The survey found that 347 meals have more than 2.4g salt per portion – that's 52% of all meals surveyed that would be labelled in a supermarket with a red traffic light. Celebrity chef restaurants and high street chain restaurants both came out higher than cafes and fast food chains, partly due to larger portion sizes, with an average of 3.1g salt per meal, half a person's daily recommended amount of salt. Shockingly, the thirteen saltiest main meals in the survey contained more than your entire 6g maximum recommended daily allowance of salt.

[Click here](#) for more information.

A report on restaurant's public support for salt reduction so far was published, assessing caterer's commitment to salt reduction. The report found that on the whole, consumers are being let down by the inconsistent approach to reducing salt, with some companies making progress in one or two areas, but less in others. No 'gold standard' companies were apparent, with progress needed across the board. This report will be updated over time; we are asking companies mentioned to keep us abreast of progress within their organisation.

[Click here](#) to view the full report

A lot of progress has been made since the release of the report, with Jamie Oliver Licensing Limited now signed up to the [Salt Reduction pledge](#). Jamie's Italian has also signed up to the [Salt Catering Procurement Pledge](#). Jamie Oliver is leading the way for salt reduction in the catering industry, and we are now in discussions with a number of restaurants, in the hope that they will soon follow suit.

Public Opinion Survey on Salt Intake & Eating Out – March 2013

In February 2013 a public opinion survey was carried out by an external market research agency, as part of Salt Awareness Week, asking the UK population how they feel about the salt content of their meals when eating out. The



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survey found that nearly 70% of respondents agreed chefs could add less salt during cooking, and over half found restaurant meals too salty. These responses are very encouraging, and demonstrate that people do indeed take an interest in the amount of salt that is present in their food.

[Click here](#) for more information.

The biggest survey of its kind reveals the alarming amounts of salt hidden in cheese (November 2012)



Cheese is a very popular food in the UK, with an estimated 98% of households buying it on a regular basis. We recently carried out a survey looking at nearly 800 cheese products available in the UK supermarkets and found many were higher than they could be.

Per 100g average, feta (2.51g) and Halloumi (2.71g) were found to contain more salt than seawater. Even worse was Roquefort (3.43g) with many versions containing over 1g salt per portion – more than in a rasher of bacon! Britain's favourite, cheddar cheese, was found to contain more salt than a packet of crisps with an average 0.52g salt per 30g portion.

Salt is not necessary in these high amounts, with many cheddar products in the market containing less salt, proving it can be done. Examples of such low salt cheddar cheeses include Wyke Farm super light, containing 0.37g salt per portion, and Morrisons England extra mature cheddar, with 0.39g salt per portion.

CASH chairman Professor MacGregor said *“Cheese is still a big contributor of salt in the diet. We urge the government to stop dragging its heels and set new, lower, targets for cheese manufacturers to work towards...the Department of Health must now stop its delaying tactics and set new much lower targets for cheese manufacturers, and make sure they achieve them.”*

Since our research was published, Tesco's have taken this information on board and launched a new cheddar cheese product with 30% less salt. The cheese has been made by dairy producers Joseph Heler, who have become well known for their work within the reduced fat cheese market. This demonstrates to the rest of the industry that it is possible and urge other supermarkets to make reductions across the board!

New research reveals high and unnecessary levels of salt in bacon (September 2012)



In September CASH carried out a survey looking at salt levels in bacon and revealed huge and unnecessarily high levels of salt in these processed meats, with some containing **more than half** the daily recommendation of salt in 2 rashers of bacon. High examples include Tesco's thick cut smoked back rashers, containing 2.6g salt for 2 grilled rashers, and Morrison's Saver streaky bacon, with 3g salt in 2 grilled rashers.

Large variations were found in the saltiness of bacon, even within the same supermarket, with some brands containing **three times** more salt than others from the **same** supermarket (Morrison's). There was also no pattern to the variation in salt content of the different types of bacon i.e. smoked bacon did not consistently



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come out higher in salt compared to unsmoked, despite common perceptions. This further emphasises the importance of clear and uniform labelling.

Sales of bacon and other cheap processed foods have increased as a result of the recession, with people on a tight budget doing their best to feed their families.

Your child's pub lunch could be putting their health at risk (June 2012)



In June we decided to look at the levels of salt present in children's meals at some of the country's leading pub and fast food chains, as traditional family pub lunches are common practice around the UK. Results were shocking, with some meals containing **more** than a child's recommended salt intake of 4g for an entire day!

Of the popular pub and fast food chains reviewed, the 5 highest levels of salt were found in Nando's Nandino's veggie burger with creamy mash (5.3g salt), Weatherspoons Wiltshire cured ham and cheese sandwich with chips (4.8g salt) and Harvester's gammon and chicken combo with mashed potato and beans (4.3g salt).

With no nutritional information on the menus it is impossible for parents to make a healthier choice for their children, and is unacceptable that as a result, parents are unknowingly putting their children's health at risk.

FoodSwitch App

Following the success of the FoodSwitch smart phone App in Australia, developed by the George Institute, we have been collaborating with MCR Human Nutrition Research

and the British Heart Foundation to launch a UK version of the App!

FoodSwitch will be free to download and aims to provide customers with simple traffic light labelling of foods. The app will be quick and easy to use; all you have to do is scan a products bar code and information on energy, fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt will be given. What's even better and unique to this app is its "Switch" feature, providing you with additional information on "healthier alternatives" within a similar food category, making it easier for the consumer to make healthy choices.

We are currently creating a database of food products for all the main supermarkets and hope to make the App available in Autumn 2013.

Salt in the News

Labelling Consultation

On 24th October 2012 the Department of Health announced proposals for front of pack nutrition labeling that clearly displays the level of fat, saturated fat, sugars, salt and calories within a product. The Department of Health requested the British Retail Consortium (BRC) launch a consultation to seek views on what the new front of pack nutrition labeling system should look like. CASH responded to the consultation, along with a number of other associated charities, and look forward to the final decision. The new label is expected to be in use by summer 2013.

- [CASH Response to BRC consultation \(27th February\)](#)
- [CASH Comment: Hybrid Food Labelling \(24th October\)](#)
- [Tesco commit to traffic light labels \(22nd August\)](#)
- [Morrison's announces support for hybrid food labelling system \(24th September\)](#)

The Responsibility Deal - update



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A Which? Report in December 2012 assessed food companies' progress in meeting targets set by the Responsibility Deal and found that while some companies are leading by example e.g. Mars and Heinz, more action is needed from the government to apply pressure on poorer performing companies and ensure that 2012 salt reduction targets are met.

- [Which? Consumer report finds Responsibility Deal is not working](#) (3rd January 2013)

During Salt Awareness Week 2013, the public health minister Anna Soubry, MP, announced that the Department of Health had published a new salt strategy, which sets out their plan in making further progress in reducing salt in the nation's diet. The strategy comprises of four key areas; revising the 2012 salt targets, encouraging the out of home sector to do more, asking companies to use their influence in the market, and getting more companies across the industry to sign up to salt reduction. Meetings will be held throughout the year to review different salt targets for different food categories, and are due to start in June.

CASH strongly supports the governments new commitment to help cut salt intake, and approves of the initiative to get more caterers signed up to the Responsibility Deal, as our latest survey showed once again the incredibly high amounts of salt still used in the out of home sector.

- [CASH comment on Department of Health press release 'Government drive to help cut salt consumption by a quarter'](#) (12th March 2013)

Salt catering pledges

The Department of Health and the Food Network have developed separate pledges for caterers, which are being distributed to relevant parties. The pledges include a number of different criteria, including procurement and kitchen practices, and will give caterers slightly longer to meet the targets, acknowledging the fact that they are

currently lagging behind the rest of the food industry. Some companies have signed up to one or more of the pledges, e.g. BaxterStory, McDonalds, Nestle UK, but more needs to be done. CASH will be working hard this year to encourage more of the out of home sector to sign up to these three catering pledges.

- [CASH comment on new catering salt pledges](#) (27th July 2012)

Public Health Toolkit

On 10th April 2013, the Department of Health launched a new toolkit to support local authorities in encouraging local businesses to join in on the public health agenda. The toolkit contains simple actions which businesses could take to improve staff and customer health and well-being, and includes healthy tips for restaurants to adopt in order to reduce salt levels of their dishes. Some local authorities e.g. Sutton and Merton Council, have already signed up and have made significant progress in their boroughs. Watch this space!

- [Localising the Public Health Responsibility Deal - a toolkit for local authorities](#) (10th April 2013)

Food Technology

In order to reach some of the 'more challenging' salt targets, the FDF and BRC have commissioned Leatherhead Food Research to produce an independent report to identify technological solutions to salt reduction across 8 "challenging" food categories. We hope the report will benefit the wider food industry and ultimately have a positive impact on health, by offering solutions for those currently not meeting the targets.


CASH does not believe there to be any technical issues with salt reduction that would prevent targets being met by the end of the year. We produced our own report highlighting examples of products in each of the problem categories which already meet the targets. This was sent to Leatherhead Food for their consideration when putting together their report, which was published in June 2012.

- [Further salt reductions are achievable](#) (13th July 2012)
- [FMCG Magazine Sept 2012 - Are the salt reduction targets realistic?](#) (17th September 2012)

A Pinch of Salt News

-  [WASH: Stealthy reduction still best – but all food needs clearer salt labelling](#) (23rd April)
-  [Is population wide salt reduction necessary?](#) (23rd April)
-  [Sodium reduction: 'Savoury products across the board are struggling with sodium reduction'](#) (23rd April)
-  [What's next for salt reduction policy?](#) (19th April)
-  [Consumers are attracted to low sodium claims on foods, says new analysis](#) (18th April)
-  [Halve our salt intake and save millions of lives, says new report](#) (5th April)
-  [Effect of longer term modest salt reduction on blood pressure](#) (5th April)
-  [High salt intake causes 2.3 million deaths per year](#) (25th March)
-  [New research exposes the salt hidden in restaurant meals](#) (11th March)
-  [CASH public opinion survey on salt intake in restaurant meals](#) (11th March)
-  [Salt linked to immune rebellion in study](#) (7th March)
-  [CASH Comment: Reducing sodium in U.S. may save hundreds of thousands of lives over 10 years](#) (12th February)
-  [WHO issues new guidance on dietary salt and potassium](#) (31st January)
-  [CASH supports Children's Future Fund](#) (29th January)
-  [Fewer adults add salt at the table after initiation of a national salt campaign in the UK](#) (29th January)

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-  [Higher salt intakes found in people with lower socioeconomic status](#) (21st January)
-  [WHO issues new guidance on dietary salt and potassium](#) (21st January)
-  [Higher salt intakes found in people with lower socioeconomic status](#) (21st January)
-  [Which? Consumer report finds Responsibility Deal is not working](#) (3rd January)

Science News

Higher salt intakes found in people with lower socioeconomic status

A study carried out by fellow CASH member Francesco Cappuccio and colleagues has shown that people in lower socioeconomic groups eat more salt. Sodium data from over 2000 white participants were analysed from the 2000-2001 National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS), using a 7 day dietary record and a 24 hour urinary collection. The variation of salt intake in Great Britain was evaluated, and revealed greater salt intakes in Scotland, compared to England and Wales. Higher levels of salt intake were also detected in those of low socioeconomic positions, regardless of where they live.

Ji, C et al. *BMJ Open*. 2013;3:e002246 doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2012-002246

Fewer adults add salt at the table after initiation of a national salt campaign in the UK

A study conducted by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine shows that people in England are



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adding less salt to their food at the table, with the greatest decline (in salt intake at the table) following a national campaign to reduce the populations salt intake, initiated by The Food Standards Agency in 2003. In the first of its kind, this study assessed directly the effect of the campaign on the addition of salt at the table by consumers. Data was obtained from the Health Survey for England over a period of 10 years and found that since 1997, there has been a steady decrease in the number of people adding salt at the table. This was specifically observed in women, non-white ethnic groups, high and middle-income households and those living within central and southern regions of England.

Sutherland, J et al. BJN Firstview article page 1-7

doi:10.1017/S0007114512005430

Effect of longer term modest salt reduction on blood pressure: Cochrane systematic review and meta-analysis of randomised trials

This systematic review and meta-analysis of thirty four trials demonstrated that a modest reduction in salt intake for four or more weeks causes a significant fall in blood pressure, both in hypertensive and normotensive individuals, irrespective of sex and ethnic group. These results support a reduction in population salt intake, which will lower population blood pressure and thereby reduce cardiovascular disease.

He, F et al. BMJ 2013;346:f1325 doi: 10.1136/bmj.f1325

Changes in Sodium Levels in Processed and Restaurant Foods, 2005 to 2011

This comparison study evaluated changes in sodium levels in processed and fast food restaurant foods between 2005 and 2011 and found sodium reductions to be inconsistent and slow, confirming the slow pace seen in voluntary reductions. Stronger action is needed to lower sodium levels and reduce the prevalence of hypertension and cardiovascular disease.

Jacobson, M et al. JAMA Intern Med. 2013;E1.

doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2013.6154

Cheese. What is its contribution to the sodium intake of Brazilians?

This study evaluated the sodium contents of cheeses available in Brazil and the contribution of cheese to the daily intake of this micronutrient. Over 150 commercial samples of various types of Brazilian cheese were evaluated and a high variability in the sodium contents of cheeses within each category was observed. With the exception of Minas cheese, more than 70% of the cheeses examined in this study were classified as high-sodium cheeses, with contents exceeding 400mg/100g. These results suggest that cheese manufacturers need to reformulate their products and that public health authorities need to take additional measures to curb sodium intake from cheese consumption.

Felicio, TL et al. Appetite 2013;66:84-88 doi:

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2013.03.002,

Nutritional content of supermarket ready meals and recipes by television chefs in the United Kingdom: cross sectional study



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100 main meal recipes from five bestselling cookery books by UK television chefs and 100 own brand ready meals from the three leading UK supermarkets were analysed for their nutritional content. Salt used for 'seasoning' was not assessed in the chef's meals, but was measured in the supermarket meals. The research found that neither recipes created by television chefs nor ready meals sold by three of the leading UK supermarkets complied with WHO recommendations. The recipes were less healthy than ready meals, containing significantly more energy, protein, fat, and saturated fat, and less fibre, but less salt, per portion than the ready meals.

Howard, S et al. BMJ 2012;345:e7607

doi: 10.1136/bmj.e7607

Health labelling can influence taste perception and use of table salt for reduced-sodium products

This study found that emphasising salt reduction by means of a front of pack label can have a negative effect on taste perception and salt use, especially when consumers are able to taste differences between regular products sodium-reduced products.

Liem et al. 2012. Public Health Nutrition; 15(12), 2340–2347 doi:10.1017/S136898001200064X

Sodium, Blood Pressure, and Cardiovascular Disease: Further Evidence Supporting the American Heart Association Sodium Reduction Recommendations

The American Heart Association reaffirmed its 2011 sodium reduction advice to limit sodium consumption to <1,500mg per day. This was due to reports of selected observational studies and a meta-analysis which stirred

controversy and called for recommendations of reduced sodium intake by the US general population to be abandoned. A detailed review of these studies documents substantial methodological concerns that limit the usefulness of these studies in setting, much less reversing, dietary recommendations. Indeed, the evidence base supporting recommendations for reduced sodium intake in the general population remains robust and persuasive.

Whelton et al. 2012. Circulation;126:00-00

doi: 10.1161/CIR.0b013e318279acbf

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