

To pick up or put down the salt shaker

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A study published Wednesday by the [American Journal of Hypertension](#) (AMJH) suggests that current recommended salt intakes are not applicable to all individuals and that a healthy person can safely consume between 2,600 milligrams and 5,000 milligrams of salt per day without increased risk of cardiovascular disease.

The study compared 25 individual studies looking into the diet and exercise habits of 275,000 people around the world. It was concluded from the study that diets both too low and too high in sodium are associated with increased mortality, [according to the AMJH journal](#).

Current recommendations for sodium intake differ across different agencies of health. The [American Heart Association](#) recommends less than 1,500 milligrams per day. The [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC) recommend below 2,300 milligrams per day, according to their website.

Americans consume an average 3,400 milligrams of sodium per day, according to [TODAY](#). This is an amount equivalent to about a teaspoon and a half. The new findings from the AMJH suggest that just over two teaspoons is still within the normal healthy range.

The findings have drawn criticism from the American Heart Association, which claims that, “there is a significant body of scientific research that proves a very dangerous association between sodium intake and significant health problems.”

The AMJH journal stresses that these new findings are not acceptable for all people. Those still at risk of increased mortality from high sodium diets in certain population groups. Those over age 50, African-Americans and diabetics, as well as those who have high blood pressure (or a family history) and have chronic kidney disease are still at high risk of cardiovascular disease, [according to the CDC](#). In these instances, the 1,500 milligram intake is recommended.

Still, the new findings shed light on a salt frightened America. Dr. Nancy Snyderman, NBC’s chief medical editor, agrees with the AMJH recommendations.

“My gut for years has been that we’ve made too big a deal out of salt for normal healthy people,” Snyderman [said on TODAY](#). “You need salt for your cells to function,” Snyderman explained. “If you have low blood pressure and you don’t get enough salt, you can feel lousy.”

With so many conflicting recommendations it can be confusing for consumers who might now be unsure if they should reduce their salt intakes or not. Snyderman offers

her words of encouragement, saying, "If you're normally healthy, I think you can back off and relax."