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What does extra salt do to your body- the planet's tastiest mineral?

Transcript: During the migration in evolution from the sea to the land, we brought sea salt with us in our evolutionary phase.

Human body contains many salts of which sodium chloride or table salt is the major one, making around 0.4 per cent of the body's weight a concentration pretty well equivalent to that in seawater.

So, a 50kg person would contain around 200g of sodium chloride, and that is 40 teaspoons.

Sodium is a mineral your body cells need to work normally. It helps efficient function of nerves and muscles.

Salt is essential to health. We can't survive without it. Your body can't make it, and your cells need it for proper function, help muscles and nerve function and keep the body cells hydrated.

New dietary guidelines came out with an upper limit of the recommendations is to consume 2300mg of sodium daily equivalent to one teaspoon. Our body needs only 500mg to carry out body functions like muscle contractions and nerve transmissions.

We lose sodium through sweat and urine. If this is not replenished you might feel light headed and dizzy.

It also helps to keep the right balance of fluids in your body, with the help of proper functioning kidneys.

If you suffer from chronic kidney failure, or end-stage renal disease it will be hard for your body to balance your fluid volume with the right amount of sodium and keep the right balance.

With kidney disease, your kidneys struggle to filter out the extra sodium, causing your blood pressure to go up.

High blood pressure can damage your blood vessels, heart and brain.

If you take a high salt diet, or eat lot of salt for a day or two , you will drink lot of water. Why is that? Salt seems to attract more water and alter the sodium balance, As a result your kidneys remove less water and results in high blood pressure.

High blood pressure is related to water retention, increased systemic peripheral resistance, and alters in the endothelial or inner lining function, changes the structure and function of the large elastic tissue of of the arterial wall.

If you have high blood pressure you need to reduce your salt intake and eat a diet high in fruits and veggies, and with exercise you may be able to keep of antihypertensive medication.

If you are healthy and kidneys function well it is not a priority. In short, the current thinking is that if you don't have high blood pressure the extra intake of salt does not produce high blood pressure.

A new study published in the American Journal of Hypertension analyzed data from 8,670 French adults and found that salt consumption wasn't associated with systolic blood pressure in either men or women after controlling fo factors like age.

But we know that taking too much of salt in our diet harms the kidneys due to the increased blood pressure. Kidneys find it hard to remove excess fluid in your body, too.

You could have fluid retention, clinically shown as swelling in your legs, feet and face.

Excess salt intake can form kidney stones, which can cause severe loin pains, nausea and difficulty in passing urine.

Eating too much of salt as mentioned lead to high blood pressure, which is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

Added salt in your diet increases your fluid content in the blood vessels, and creates an added burden on the heart, in addition to the high blood pressure caused by excess dietary salt.

It has been shown that a high intake of salt in your food, and low consumption of fruit and veggies related to a low potassium intake, obesity, excess alcohol consumption and lack of physical exercise can all contribute to the development of high blood pressure

People having a family history of high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke must keep their salt intake as low as possible.

Too much of eating salt in food leads ultimately to heart failure, osteoporosis, stomach cancer and kidney disease.

In June 2010, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published a report on the prevention of cardiovascular disease which highlighted salt reduction as the number one priority as a cardiovascular preventative measure. It also highlighted that we should be aiming for a salt intake of of 3g by 2025.

Rock salt

A team of scientists from the department of physics, Allahabad university has found that rock salt, also called halite, is best suited for patients suffering from any form of kidney disorder.

Rock salt or halite is also called evaporite because it is formed by the evaporation of saline water in partially enclosed basins.

It is a rock, rather than a mineral and this is what makes it different to the salt on your table.

It is found in underground deposits, in bedrock all over the world where large extinct salt lakes and seas evaporated millions of years ago, leaving behind thick deposits of salt beds

Can you get low levels of sodium in your blood?

Salt maintains our fluid and blood volume in the body and maintains our blood pressure

Yes, you could low levels of salt called hyponatremia due to drinking too much of water when you have kidney and heart failure, cirrhosis and using diuretics.

People suffering from low salt, at first becomes sluggish and confused due to brain dysfunction. Muscles start twitching and seizures.

In severe diarrhea or vomiting lose sodium and just drinking water alone your salt in blood becomes low and lead to hyponatremia.

If you suffer from above symptoms, check your blood electrolyte levels.

How do you get osteoporosis due to excess salt intake.?

Because calcium is important for bone development, too much salt intake can lead to bone weakening. High blood pressure caused due to high salt intake also increases the risk of osteoporosis due to increased loss of calcium in the bones.

Some foods can cause low bone density and osteoporosis, other than excess salt consumption, such as alcohol which can lead to bone loss: Eating too much of beans, legumes, wheat bran, vitamin A and caffeine are the other foods that can cause loss of bone density.

Salt is a major factor in controlling the amount of calcium in the urine.

People with high risk of osteoporosis should limit their salt intake as mentioned before. This can be achieved by consuming less processed foods and checking labels before purchase.

You need to increase your vitamin D intake, Zinc and copper also will help.

Some foods are high in sodium such as frozen foods, fast foods, canned foods.

Even the foods that don't taste salty can be high in sodium, such as- cheese, lunch meats, cereals, and bread

Check the nutrition label on all packaged foods, and chose foods with low sodium options.

As a general rule is to eat and drink less than 2,300mg of sodium a day.

When cooking at home, herbs and spices can add major flavor to all your favourites instead of salt.

Drink more water and less soda and sports drinks.

Hope this video talk was useful.

So remember, cut down on your added salt intake daily.

Take care, remember you can always contact me online for advise.

Goodbye for now.