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The Sodium- *Potassium* Ratio Guide

Where your sodium comes from, the daily targets, a one-day log that works out your ratio, and the potassium foods and swaps that move it.



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RATIO LOG

14

POTASSIUM FOODS

8

SODIUM SWAPS

4

TARGETS



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The Sodium-Potassium *Ratio Guide*

Blood pressure responds to the balance of sodium and potassium in your food, not to sodium alone. This guide shows where your sodium comes from, the daily targets, a one-day log that works out your ratio, and the potassium foods and swaps that move it.

2,300

MG SODIUM LIMIT

Dietary Guidelines, adults

1,500

MG AHA IDEAL

the level most adults can
aim toward

3,400

MG POTASSIUM

adequate intake for men
(2,600 women)

< 1.0

RATIO GOAL

more potassium mg than
sodium mg

How to use this guide

15 MINUTES

STEP 1

Check the potassium caution

Kidney disease or certain medicines change the advice. Read the box below first.

STEP 2

Log one ordinary day

Write what you eat on the one-day log with sodium and potassium; the guide works out the ratio.

STEP 3

Make two swaps and add two foods

Pick from the swap table and the potassium list, then log another day a week later.

POTASSIUM IS NOT RIGHT FOR EVERYONE

If you have chronic kidney disease, or take an ACE inhibitor, an ARB, a potassium-sparing diuretic or potassium supplements, do not raise potassium or use salt substitutes (which are usually potassium chloride) without your doctor. Too much potassium can be dangerous in that setting. Cutting sodium still applies.

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Why the Balance Matters

4 SOURCES

Sodium holds water in the bloodstream; potassium helps the kidneys get rid of sodium. A diet built on packaged food is high in one and low in the other, and the balance between the two is a useful single number to track.

Most of your sodium is not from the shaker. About 71% of the sodium in a typical US diet is already in packaged and restaurant food. Salt added at the table is about 6%, and salt added in home cooking another 6%. The ratio is decided in the shop more than at the stove.

Potassium is the lever most people never pull. Adding potassium-rich food is often easier than cutting sodium further, and every potato, bowl of beans or handful of greens improves the ratio.

The ratio is a simple target. Sodium milligrams divided by potassium milligrams: under 1.0 means more potassium than sodium. It is the pattern the DASH diet achieves, and reviews find the ratio is at least as closely linked to blood pressure as either mineral alone.

WHERE THE SODIUM COMES FROM (HARNACK ET AL., 2017)

SOURCE	SHARE	WHAT IT IS
Packaged, store-bought and restaurant food	about 71%	Bread, cured meat, cheese, sauces, soups, ready meals, takeout.
Naturally present in food	about 14%	Milk, vegetables, meat and fish carry small amounts on their own.
Added at the table	about 6%	The shaker.
Added in home cooking	about 6%	Pasta water, seasoning, stock cubes: the part you fully control.

THE EVIDENCE BEHIND IT

DIETARY GUIDELINES 2020-2025; AHA Sodium under 2,300 mg a day for adults; the AHA ideal is 1,500 mg for most adults.	NASEM 2019 Potassium adequate intake 3,400 mg a day for men and 2,600 mg for women.
HARNACK ET AL., CIRCULATION 2017 About 71% of dietary sodium came from packaged and restaurant food; about 11% was added at home.	PEREZ & CHANG, ADV NUTR 2014; MA ET AL., NEJM 2022 A higher sodium-to-potassium ratio is linked to higher blood pressure and cardiovascular risk; in the 2022 pooled analysis each unit rise in the ratio carried 24% higher risk.

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The One-Day Ratio Log

CALCULATES

Pick an ordinary day. Write each food and drink with its sodium and potassium from the label or the list on the next page. Estimates are fine. Type numbers without commas (1200, not 1,200).

FOOD OR DRINK	SODIUM MG	POTASSIUM MG

SODIUM FOR THE DAY

POTASSIUM FOR THE DAY

SODIUM-TO-POTASSIUM RATIO

Food diaries usually miss some sodium (salt in cooking, sauces, bread), so treat the total as a lower bound. Under 1.0 is a good first goal; the WHO targets work out at about 0.6.

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Potassium Foods and Sodium Swaps

PICK FOUR

POTASSIUM FOODS (TICK TWO TO ADD)

ADD	FOOD	POTASSIUM MG
☐	Baked potato with skin, 1 medium	925
☐	Coconut water, 1 cup	600
☐	Sweet potato, baked, 1 medium	540
☐	White beans, cooked, 1/2 cup	500
☐	Avocado, 1/2	490
☐	Banana, 1 medium	420
☐	Spinach, cooked, 1/2 cup	420
☐	Salmon, cooked, 3 oz (85 g)	400
☐	Plain whole-milk yogurt, 1 cup	380
☐	Milk, 1 cup	370
☐	Lentils, cooked, 1/2 cup	365
☐	Tomato, 1 medium	290
☐	Orange, 1 medium	240
☐	Almonds, 1 oz (28 g)	210

FOODS PICKED

SWAPS (TICK TWO TO TRY)

TRY	INSTEAD OF	TRY	SAVES MG
☐	Deli turkey, 2 oz 570	Home-roasted chicken, 2 oz 45	525
☐	Canned soup, 1 cup 800	Low-sodium soup, 1 cup 140	660
☐	Soy sauce, 1 tbsp 900	Reduced-sodium soy, 1 tsp, plus lime 190	710
☐	Canned beans, not rinsed, 1/2 cup 400	Same beans, rinsed 240	160
☐	Pickle, 1 spear 300	Fresh cucumber with vinegar 2	298
☐	Bacon, 2 slices 380	Smoked-paprika roast chicken 60	320
☐	Processed cheese, 1 oz 400	Fresh mozzarella, 1 oz 85	315
☐	Salted nuts, 1 oz 120	Unsalted nuts, 1 oz 0	120

Typical single-serving values in milligrams of sodium; brands vary, so use them to rank swaps and check the label on the products you buy.

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From One Day to a Kitchen That Runs on Less Salt

COMPANION E-BOOK

This guide shows you your ratio for one day. **The Heart-Smart Grocery & Cooking System** changes what goes into the basket and the pan: a label checker, six aisles decoded, flavor without salt, and twenty dinners with sodium and potassium counted.

A label checker and six aisles decoded
sodium per 100 g with its traffic-light color, your portion worked out, and the swaps that save the most in each aisle.

Flavor without salt
what replaces salt in eight kinds of dish, six salt-free blends, six sauces and the umami toolkit.

Twenty low-sodium dinners
each with sodium, potassium and the ratio per serving, compared with the version you would buy.

Track and test
a 3-day log that adds itself up, a 12-week palate plan, and a 4-week salt test for your blood pressure.

THIS FREE GUIDE

- ✓ Where your sodium comes from, by share
- ✓ The daily targets and a one-day ratio log
- ✓ Fourteen potassium foods and eight swaps

THE SYSTEM ADDS

- ✓ A label checker to compare any two products
- ✓ Six aisles decoded with per-100 g tables and swaps
- ✓ Twenty dinners with sodium and potassium counted
- ✓ A 3-day log, a palate plan and a 4-week salt test

FILLABLE PDF E-BOOK
Print it or fill it on screen; the calculators work in Acrobat and most browsers, plus a free online edition.

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Written to Dietary Guidelines, AHA, WHO and NASEM values, with sources. No miracle claims.

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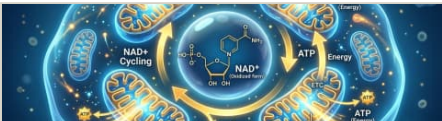
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US Dietary Guidelines 2020–2025; American Heart Association sodium guidance; NASEM Dietary Reference Intakes for Sodium and Potassium 2019	Targets.
Harnack L.J. et al., Circulation 2017	Where dietary sodium comes from.
Perez V. & Chang E.T., Advances in Nutrition 2014; Ma Y. et al., NEJM 2022	The sodium-to-potassium ratio and blood pressure and cardiovascular risk.
USDA FoodData Central; manufacturer labels	Food values (rounded).
KDIGO 2024 chronic kidney disease guideline	Potassium caution.

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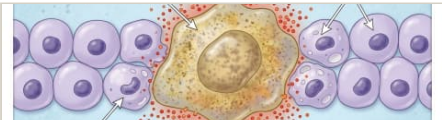


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AFTER YOUR FIRST DAY

You know your ratio. Now move it.

01 • SWAP TWO

Two swaps from the table, kept for a week.

02 • ADD TWO

Two potassium foods a day, if the caution box allows.

03 • GO FURTHER

The Heart-Smart System decodes the shop and gives you twenty dinners.

Keep reading on healthsecrets.com

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