

Healthy Eating Workshop

Cut the Salt

Workshop outline (60 minutes)

1. Welcome (7 minutes)
2. Salt Versus Sodium – What’s the Difference? (3 minutes)
3. Sodium and Its Impact on Health (5 minutes)
4. Sources of Sodium (5 minutes)
5. Strategies for Reducing Sodium (25 minutes)
6. Let’s Practice (10 minutes)
7. Closing (5 minutes)

Suggested handouts:

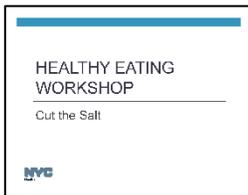
- [Cut the Salt Health Bulletin](#)
- [Just Say Yes to Fruits and Vegetables](#) Black-Eyed Peas and Collard Greens Recipe

Optional Samples:

- Samples of herbs and spices for practice activity (slide 36)

1. Welcome (7 minutes)

Slide 1:

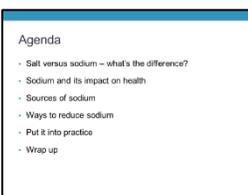


A. Introduction

Welcome to today’s healthy eating workshop. My name is <insert facilitator name>. The topic of today’s workshop is how to cut the salt.

Ask participants to fill out a name tag and discuss any housekeeping such as bathrooms, breaks, etc.

Slide 2:



B. Agenda

Let’s review our agenda for today’s workshop.

- We’ll start with an overview of salt versus sodium and how they are different, and then discuss how sodium impacts our health and what sources of sodium are in our diet.
- Much of the workshop will be about learning strategies we can use to reduce sodium.
- We’ll have time to put what we learned into practice.
- And finally, we’ll wrap up by discussing additional resources you can use to continue learning and answering any questions you have.

🕒 If short on time, ask participants to hold their questions until the end of the presentation.

Slide 3:

Objectives

After today's workshop, you will:

1. Understand how sodium affects health
2. Identify the top sources of sodium in the diet
3. Know at least two new strategies to help you reduce sodium in your diet

C. Objectives

After today's workshop, you will:

- Understand how sodium affects health;
- Identify the top sources of sodium in the diet; and
- Know at least two new ways to help you reduce sodium in your diet.

Slide 4:

What foods do you eat that you think have a lot of sodium in them?

D. Activity

🕒 *If short on time, do this activity as a group brainstorm instead of in pairs.*

Before we dive into today's topic, I want to hear from you. What foods do you eat that you think have a lot of sodium in them?

Turn to a person next to you and share the answer to this question.

Let pairs discuss for a few minutes. Then, invite several people to share what they told their partner.

Thanks for sharing. There are many foods that have sodium in them, some more than others. Throughout today's workshop, we will share some strategies you can use to limit the amount of sodium in your diet.

2. Salt Versus Sodium – What's the Difference? (3 minutes)

Slide 5:

What is Sodium?



- Sodium is an essential mineral that helps control blood pressure and other functions in our body.
- Salt is a source of sodium.
- Salt is often used as a preservative and to flavor food.
- Most people eat too much sodium but may not know it.

1 teaspoon of salt = 2,300 milligrams of sodium

A. What is Sodium?

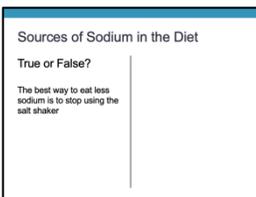
Before we go further, let's talk about what sodium is and how it is different from salt.

- Sodium is a mineral our body needs to help control blood pressure and other functions in our body.
- When we talk about salt, we are referring to the substance you add to dishes, which is a source of sodium. Salt is often used as a preservative, meaning it helps keep food in good condition for longer, and to flavor food. So, by including salt in your diet, you are giving your body sodium to help it work properly.
- Our bodies need only very small amounts of sodium. Most people eat too much sodium but may not be aware of it.
- One teaspoon of salt is equal to about 2,300 milligrams of sodium.

salt have larger grains than table salt so they may contain less sodium when measured by teaspoon. Because of flavor and texture differences, different types of salt may be used at different times in the cooking process. There are different types of salt substitutes, some with low amounts of sodium. Always ask your doctor before using a salt substitute.

4. Sources of Sodium (5 minutes)

Slide 8:



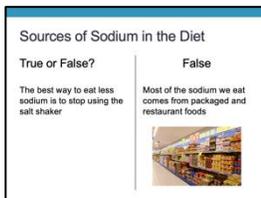
A. Sources of Sodium: True or False?

Before we talk about where sodium is found in our food, let's play a quick game.

Raise your hand if you think the following statement is true. Keep your hand down if you think it is false.

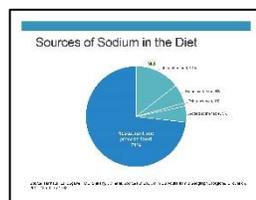
The best way to eat less sodium is to stop using the salt shaker. *Briefly pause and look around the room to see how people guessed.*

Slide 9:



It's false! Most of the sodium we eat comes from packaged and restaurant foods.

Slide 10:



Here is a look at the different sources of sodium in our diets. As you can see, 71% of the sodium we eat comes from restaurant and processed food. This is essentially food that is changed in some way, packaged, sold at stores and prepared at restaurants.

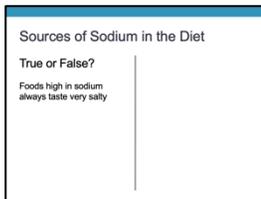
Salt added during cooking or from the salt shaker at the table amount to just over 10% of the sodium in our diet.

Notes to facilitator:

- Other sources of sodium include tap water and supplements.
- The percentages on this pie chart do not add up to 100% because the methods used for data collection analysis relied on per person

averages and resulted in the loss of a couple percentage points when added together.

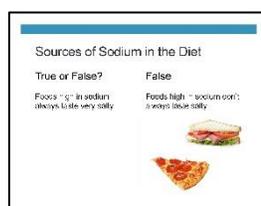
Slide 11:



Let's do another true or false question. Raise your hand if you think this statement is true. Keep your hand down if you think it is false.

Foods high in sodium always taste very salty. *Briefly pause and look around the room to see how people guessed.*

Slide 12:

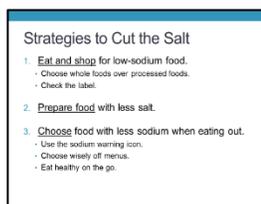


This is also false! Foods high in sodium don't always taste salty. Specifically, the top food sources of sodium include breads and rolls, pizza, sandwiches, cold cuts and cured meats, soups, and burritos and tacos.

These foods account for 44% of the sodium consumed in the United States.

5. Strategies to Cut the Salt (25 minutes)

Slide 13:



A. Strategies to Cut the Salt Overview

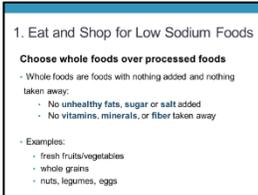
Now that we've reviewed how eating too much sodium can affect your health, the recommended sodium limits and where sodium is found, let's talk about some strategies you can use to cut the sodium you and your children eat. While agencies like the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Health Department) have led longer term initiatives to reduce sodium in packaged foods and restaurants, the strategies we will discuss today are steps you can put into practice in your life now.

We'll talk about ways to eat and shop for low-sodium foods, how to flavor foods without salt and how to choose foods with less sodium when eating out. Specifically, we will discuss ways to:

- Eat and Shop** for low-sodium food;
 - Choose whole foods over processed foods.
 - Check the label.
- Prepare food** with less salt;
- Choose** food with less sodium when eating out.

- Use the sodium warning icon.
- Choose wisely off menus.
- Eat healthy on the go.

Slide 14:



B. Strategy 1: Eat and Shop for Low Sodium Foods

A general strategy to eat less sodium is to eat more whole foods. Since most sodium is in processed and restaurant foods, choosing whole and less processed foods more often than processed foods is one way to reduce sodium.

But what are whole foods? Would anyone like to define? *Wait for and validate all responses.*

Whole foods are foods that have had nothing added or taken away. When food is processed, unhealthy fat, sugar and salt usually get added. All are ingredients that can add to your risk of developing a chronic disease. Some nutrients, like vitamins, minerals, and fiber, are often removed, or “taken away” during processing.

What are some examples of whole foods? *Accept responses and make corrections as needed.*

Some examples of whole foods include fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, legumes and eggs.

You can think of all foods as being on a spectrum, from whole foods to highly processed foods. We all eat from the entire spectrum. But, choosing to eat mostly whole foods or less processed foods is a strategy you can use to eat healthier and help lower your sodium intake.

Slide 15:



I. Choose Whole Foods Over Processed Foods

Let’s look at what fruits, vegetables, protein and grains fall on this spectrum.

- Whole foods are the healthiest options and have not been changed. These can include fresh, whole fruits and vegetables, whole grains such as oats, plant-based proteins like beans and lentils, fish and other seafood and lean cuts of poultry and meat.
- Frozen fruits and vegetables go directly next to fresh produce, as they are usually only slightly processed. They typically have nothing added and retain almost all of their nutrients. Similarly, while canned fruits and vegetables may be more processed, they can still be healthy options.

- As protein foods become more processed, like meatballs or fish sticks, that you might make at home, they become less healthy, but can still have a place in an otherwise healthy diet.
- Very processed foods are the least healthy for you because they contain a lot of added salt and have been stripped of many nutrients. For example, processed meats are loaded with sodium—400% more sodium than unprocessed red meats, on average. You should limit eating processed meats, such as hot dogs, sausage and deli meats, as well as other highly processed foods.

There are different places where you might shop for food including the supermarket, farmers market, corner store or big box store. But when shopping at a supermarket, how do you find the whole foods? Pause for responses.

Start shopping at the produce section. From there, the outside aisles of the supermarket are often where the whole foods are. But you must also look at labels, which brings us to our second strategy, check the label.

Slide 16:

II. Check the Label



The next strategy under shopping for foods with less sodium is to check the label of packaged foods. We all eat foods that are minimally processed or even more processed sometimes.

Packaged foods have some information that can help you find how much sodium is in the food, so you can make an informed choice to eat less sodium.

Slide 17:

II. Check the Label: Nutrition Facts



The Nutrition Facts label is a good tool on the back of packaged foods that you can use to guide your choice. It gives you the most reliable information on a variety of nutrient levels in the food you are buying, including sodium. The Nutrition Facts label is very useful when comparing two similar products (such as choosing bread), so you can choose the lower sodium option.

What is the first thing you should look at when reading the Nutrition Facts label? *Wait for and validate all responses.*

Note to Facilitator: If asked about the Nutrition Facts label, you can share the following information with participants. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) updated the Nutrition Facts labels in 2018 based on

new research to support a healthier diet. Companies have until 2020 to use the new label. This presentation uses the new Nutrition Facts label.

Slide 18:



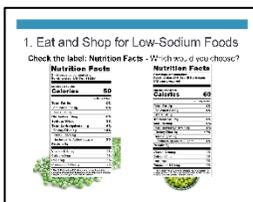
You should always check the serving size first when reading the label.

- All the nutrition information listed on the label refers to one serving of that food.
- If you eat more than one serving, you will need to multiply the nutrition information by the number of servings you eat.
- In this case, the serving size is listed as one slice of bread. If you were to make a sandwich using two slices of bread, you'd have to double the amount of sodium. So, you'd be getting 16% of your daily value of sodium instead of just 8%.

Once you've determined the serving size, you should look at the percent Daily Value (DV) on the label. The percent DV on the label tells you how much of a nutrient is part of your daily diet. The percent DV is based on an average 2,000 calorie diet that is recommended for adults, so it is best to think of the DV as a general guide.

Choose foods that have a low percent DV for sodium per serving size. This will help ensure that the product does not have a lot of salt. Generally, low percent DV for sodium is 5% or less and a high percent DV for sodium is 20% or more.

Slide 19:

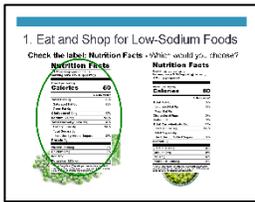


II. Check the Label: Let's Practice

Let's practice. Here are two labels – the one on the left is for frozen peas and the one on the right is for canned peas. We already mentioned that when reading the Nutrition Facts label, you must look at the serving size first. What is the serving size for these two pea products? Wait for and validate all responses. The serving size for both types of peas is one half cup when prepared. That means the nutrition information on the label is for one half cup of each product. That makes it easy to compare them.

For this activity, let's compare the amount of sodium in these two products. Which of these two products is the better option based on the information on these Nutrition Facts labels? *Pause for a few moments while collecting responses.*

Slide 20:



The frozen peas are the better option in this case.

- Canned peas have 300 milligrams of sodium per serving compared to zero milligrams in one serving of the frozen peas. The amount of sodium in one serving of the canned peas equals 13% of the DV.
- The sodium in one half cup of frozen peas is 0% of the DV. Five percent or less of DV is generally considered low.

Canned vegetables and beans can sometimes be good as a quick option. When purchasing canned vegetables and beans, look for cans labeled low or no sodium. What else can you do with canned vegetables and beans to lower the amount of sodium they have? Pause a few moments while collecting responses. Rinse canned vegetables and beans before eating. This will help reduce the amount of sodium.

Note to facilitator: if asked, differences in calories are due to frozen product enlarging slightly. It takes slightly over one half cup frozen peas to make one half cup prepared.

Slide 21:



II. Check the Label: Front of Package

Now let's talk about claims, meaning the label found on the front of packaged foods. Products that meet government standards for low sodium (140 milligrams of sodium or less per serving) can add low-sodium claims on their packaging. The FDA also has criteria for what it means to be "sodium-free", "lightly salted" and "reduced sodium". These are reliable claims that can help you find lower sodium products quickly.

When buying canned foods, look for low-sodium, lightly salted, reduced-sodium or no salt added products. Always check the Nutrition Facts label to confirm and compare sodium content of foods.

Slide 22:



C. Strategy 2: Prepare Food with Less Salt

When cutting back on salt, you don't have to cut back on flavor. There are lots of great flavors in herbs, spices, fruits and vegetables that can enhance the flavor of your food, so you don't have to add salt. With a few simple cooking techniques, you can bring those flavors out when preparing food at home.

I. Prepare Food with Less Salt: Herbs and Spices

What are your favorite herbs and spices to use? *Wait for and validate all responses.*

There are so many herbs and spices to choose from. Here are a few examples you can use.

Here are some tips for using herbs and spices when cooking:

- If you're new to using spices in food, start by adding a small pinch to the pan at a time and stir-fry the spices in a little oil for about thirty seconds to release their aromas.
- Fresh soft herbs like basil, cilantro and parsley should be added towards the end of cooking, so they don't break down too much.
- When using dried herbs in cooking, add them to your dish at the beginning of cooking. This will give them more time to cook down and release their flavors into the food.

Note to facilitator: fresh herbs with harder leaves like rosemary, oregano and thyme should be added at the beginning of cooking.

Slide 23:



II. Prepare Food with Less Salt: Savory and Aromatic Vegetables

Another way to add flavor to food without adding salt is to use vegetables. This also gives us more nutrients in our dishes.

What are examples of different vegetables that add flavor to food? *Wait for and validate all responses.*

Slide 24:



Savory vegetables include potatoes, tomatoes and mushrooms.

- They are great to add to dishes for a hearty or meaty flavor. You may have tasted these flavors in a flavorful stew or tomato sauce.

Aromatic vegetables include onion, garlic, ginger, celery, carrots and peppers.

- Aromatic vegetables can release delicious smells and, in turn, boost the flavor of foods.

A great way to bring out the flavor of both savory and aromatic vegetables is caramelization.

- Caramelization is when natural sugars in food react with heat to create a sweet flavor and golden-brown color.
- You can caramelize aromatic and savory vegetables by sautéing them in a pan with a little oil or roasting them in the oven.

Slide 25:



III. Prepare Food with Less Salt: Heat and Acid

You can also use heat and acid to boost flavors in foods. What ways do you make your dishes spicy or bring out the flavor by adding something acidic? *Wait for and validate all responses.*

Slide 26:



Not everyone loves spicy foods, but for those of you that do, adding hot peppers and other hot spices is another great way to increase the flavor without adding extra salt.

- If you want to reduce the heat of hot peppers, scrape the membrane, the inner part of the pepper, and seeds out of the pepper with a spoon. If you use your hands or if your skin is sensitive, consider using gloves to protect your skin.

Acids can make dishes go from dull and boring to exciting and more flavorful. Have you ever made a recipe and tasted it at the end only to discover that it was a little dull or missing something? Before you reach for the salt, try adding an acid.

- Like salt, acid can increase flavor. It can also bring out more flavors than salt.
- Different types of acids that can be used in cooking include vinegars, tomatoes and wine.
- Other acids include juice of citrus fruits like lemons, limes and oranges.
- If using acid to increase flavor in a dish, add a splash of vinegar, wine or some tomatoes at the beginning of cooking, and add a splash of citrus juice at the end of cooking.
- These are general rules, but you can experiment in your own kitchen and find out what you like.

Slide 27:

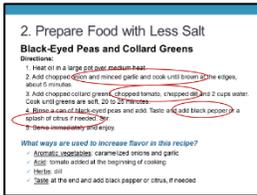


Let's walk through an example of how these cooking strategies work in a recipe. Here are the steps of how to make a black-eyed peas and collard greens dish. As I read through them, look for any tips used to increase flavor in this recipe.

Read steps one through five in the recipe on the slide.

What ways are used to increase flavor in this recipe? *Wait for and validate all responses, then move to the next slide.*

Slide 28:

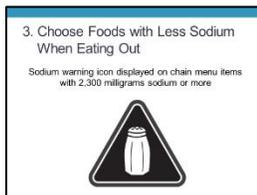


There are many ways used to boost flavor in this recipe.

- Onions and garlic are aromatic vegetables and they were caramelized at the beginning to create a nice flavor.
- Acid was added at the beginning of the recipe with the tomato.
- Dill, which is an herb, was also added to create flavor.
- And finally, the recipe was tasted at the end and suggests that black pepper or citrus juice can be added, if needed.

Notice that the can of black-eyed peas was rinsed before being added to the dish. This will help remove extra sodium in the can. Salt was not used in this recipe at all and it sounds delicious. I encourage you to try these tips, and maybe even this recipe, at home.

Slide 29:



D. Strategy 3: Choose Food with Less Sodium When Eating Out

I. Use the Sodium Warning Icon

Let's talk about our third and final strategy: eating foods with less sodium in restaurants and on the go. We mentioned earlier that more than 70% of the sodium in our diet comes from restaurant and processed foods. And foods high in sodium don't always taste salty.

Because so much of the sodium we eat comes from restaurant food, cooking more at home will decrease your sodium intake, as we have discussed. But limiting your sodium intake from restaurant food can also significantly lower your overall sodium intake.

The sodium warning icon at chain restaurants can help you find menu items that have 2,300 milligrams or more of sodium. Chain restaurants in NYC must label menu items that have more than 2,300 milligrams of sodium in them. Remember, 2,300 milligrams of sodium is the greatest daily sodium intake that is recommended for adults and children age 14 or older. Choose dishes without this warning.

Slide 30:

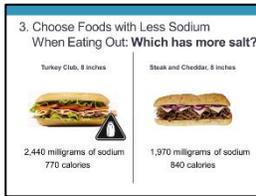


II. Choose Food with Less Sodium When Eating Out: Quiz

Let's do a quick quiz to see if you can guess which of these two sandwiches from a common chain restaurant has more sodium.

Do you think the turkey club or the steak and cheddar sandwich is higher in sodium? *Wait for and validate all responses, then move to the next slide.*

Slide 31:



The steak and cheddar sandwich has 1,970 milligrams of sodium, which is a very high amount. The turkey club has even more, with 2,440 milligrams of sodium. This amount is more than the daily recommendation for adults and children age 14 or older, so the sodium warning label would be next to only this sandwich on the menu.

Let's also look at how many calories are in each of these sandwiches. The steak and cheddar sandwich has more calories than the turkey club, but not by much. All chain restaurants will list the calorie information for their menu items.

II. Choose Wisely Off Menus: Plan Ahead

Slide 32:



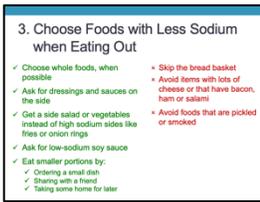
Another good strategy to help you choose wisely from chain restaurant menus is to look at available nutrition information before you go to the restaurant.

You can find nutrition information for most chain restaurants on the restaurant's website. The website lists the sodium content of menu items. You can use that information to decide ahead of time what you will order. You may also base your choice on the calorie and other nutrient content of the various menu items.

Another tool that can help you make informed choices at chain restaurants is Menustat.org. Menustat.org is an interactive nutrition database created and supported by the Health Department. Anyone can access it online for free. It contains all the nutritional information of the foods and beverages served by the nation's largest chain restaurants, including sit-down restaurants, like Applebee's, and fast food restaurants, like McDonald's. Menustat.org doesn't apply to non-chain restaurants, of which there are many in NYC.

If you will be dining at or getting takeout from a chain restaurant, you can use Menustat.org to plan what you will eat ahead of time. If you have a favorite chain restaurant, you can use this tool to learn what to avoid and what choices work best for your diet. *If time allows, go to Menustat.org and explore the site.*

Slide 33:



II. Choose Wisely Off Menus

Many restaurants in NYC are not chains. Here are additional tips to help you eat healthier in restaurants.

Eating more whole foods can help reduce your sodium intake when eating out. What are some ways you can do this in restaurants? *Wait for and validate all responses.*

- When possible, choose whole foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, legumes and eggs.
- Ask for dressings and sauces on the side, so you can control how much you add to your dish. You can also ask to swap sides for healthier options. For example, if a meal comes with French fries on the side, ask for a side salad or vegetables instead.
- Ask for low-sodium soy sauce. Many restaurants have the option and all you have to do is ask.
- You can also control the amount of sodium by eating smaller portions. This can help prevent overeating and food waste and save you money.
 - Eat smaller portions by ordering a small dish for yourself or sharing a larger dish with a friend.
 - Take some of a larger meal home to eat for your next meal. This is a great strategy because you could get two meals for the price of one and you can eat it for lunch or dinner the next day. If you ask, restaurants may provide you with a to-go container at the beginning of your meal so you can portion out half the meal before you start to eat. This can lower any urge to eat the entire meal in one sitting.

You can limit your sodium intake by:

- Skipping the breadbasket. Remember, bread adds a lot of sodium to our diet because we eat a lot of it. And it typically doesn't taste salty, so we may not know how much sodium we are eating.
- Avoiding menu items that have a lot of cheese or include processed meats, such as bacon, ham and salami.
- Avoiding foods that are pickled or smoked. Smoked foods are often high in sodium because of the marinades (acidic sauce), rubs (blend of spices) and brines (water with salt) that are used before the meat or fish is smoked.

These simple tips will help you lower your sodium intake. What other ways can you limit your sodium intake when eating out? *Wait for and validate all responses.*

Slide 34:



III. Eat Healthy on the Go

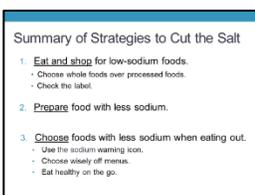
Many of the tips we've discussed when eating at restaurants can also be applied whenever we eat food outside the home. This can include eating meals and snacks at work, when you're out with your family for the day and generally eating and snacking on the go.

Here are some ways you can make healthier, low-sodium choices when eating snacks on the go or for meals at work.

- Be sure to always take healthy options with you to snack on when you're on the go.
 - Examples of healthy and portable snacks include many fruits, vegetables, whole grain crackers and nuts.
 - This allows you to have something healthy to snack on and will also help you avoid buying a potentially salty snack when you're out.
- Bring a packed lunch with you to work every day. That way you can control what is in your lunch and you can make low-sodium choices using the ways discussed earlier in this presentation.
- When buying and preparing food at home for your lunch, choose whole foods over processed foods and flavor your food without salt.

You can also talk to your office administrator at your workplace about adopting healthier eating policies. The NYC Health Department supports and encourages creating a healthier food environment in NYC workplaces by providing resources to help institutions and organizations serve healthier food. This can work well with existing workplace wellness programs. For information and resources, visit nyc.gov/health and search for "Food Standards."

Slide 35:



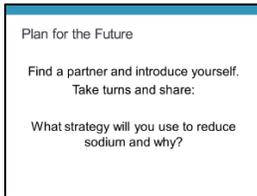
E. Summary

Let's recap everything we've talked about.

- First, eat and shop for low-sodium foods. This involves choosing whole foods over processed foods, which include fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, legumes and eggs. Also, check the label on packaged foods to choose lower sodium options.

Slide 37:

B. Plan for the Future Activity



Congratulations, you just practiced creating a no-salt seasoning mix! I hope you all try out your creations at home.

As we wrap up, I'd like you all to please take another few minutes to think about one specific strategy you learned today that you plan to use and why. Tell a partner what strategy you will use. Be specific and share how you will use this new strategy this week.

Strategies may include:

- Eating out less and cooking at home more.
- Making it a practice to read Nutrition Facts labels.
- Using more spices and herbs and less salt in your cooking.

Allow two minutes for participants to discuss among themselves.

7. Closing (5 minutes)

Slide 38:

A. Resources



Now that you have planned to use this information, here are some additional resources that are available to you to make changes to your diet:

1. The NYC Health Department has many materials on their website that you can read or print. These include:
 - Cut the Salt Health Bulletin
 - Healthy Eating and Active Living Guide.
2. The Health Department carries out a variety of programming at farmers markets. You can find your nearest farmers market location and hours by texting "SoGood" to 877877. You can also download or get a hard copy of a farmers market map. From July through November, the Health Department provides free nutrition education and cooking classes at markets across NYC. The maps will indicate which markets host those classes.
3. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a variety of healthy eating resources available if you visit choosemyplate.gov, including a place to download handouts and recipes and sign up for email tips.

Slide 39:



B. Thanks for Attending

I hope this workshop has offered some new ideas and addressed some of the questions you have about reducing sodium in your diet.

We have time to take a few questions before we wrap up.

Presentation Sources:

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