

## April Health News U Can Use

For years, the Mount Airy Baptist Church has been partnering with the Leadership Council for Healthy Communities (LCHC). This partnership is facilitated through our LCHC health liaison, Ms. Jacqueline Smith, who has provided our church with valuable information and resources from the LCHC; today is no different. Through Jackie, we have the content for this month's health news u can use!

Easter is in the month of April!



April also is the **National Minority Health Month**, which is a time focused on "Bridging Health Equity Across Communities."

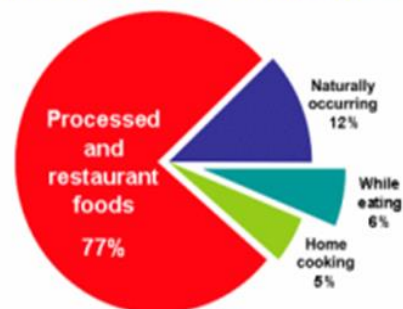
Did you know heart disease is the leading cause of death in DC, with death rates among African Americans almost three times that of whites. In Wards 4, 5, 7 & 8, at least one out of every three residents has been diagnosed with high blood pressure. Uncontrolled high blood pressure is the main cause of heart disease. Visit

Often people talk about cutting back on salt, but here is something to consider to help reduce our intake of salt.

### **Cut Down on Processed Foods**

Most of the sodium Americans eat comes from packaged, processed, store-bought, and restaurant foods. Only a small amount comes from salt added during cooking or at the table. In fact, most Americans already get more daily sodium than recommended before they ever pick up a salt shaker.

### **Most Sodium Comes from Processed and Restaurant Foods**



### **What is processed food?**

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans define the term "processed food" includes "any raw agricultural commodity [product] that has been subject to processing, such as canning, cooking, freezing, dehydration, or milling." 1 Processing certain foods can make them last longer by killing organisms in the food or slowing their growth.

So, do not worry too much, that too is bad for your health. The best thing is to read labels, and look for the information on sodium. Also, always be mindful of your numbers: blood pressure, cholesterol and glucose (diabetes levels). Knowing this information, watching what you eat and exercising can help to bridge the health gap. This can also mean saving your life and the lives of your loved one; remember that your life and theirs matter to God and your church family.

[www.chronicdiseaselocal.org/LCHC](http://www.chronicdiseaselocal.org/LCHC) to find a clinic or doctor near you for a blood pressure screening. Also, be prepared to make changes to your life. By doing this, such as lowering your blood pressure numbers, and exercising more, you will be able to enjoy life more.

One way to lower blood pressure is to watch your sodium intake.

### Sodium Facts

Sodium is an essential mineral in our bodies. It is a major component of fluid balances and is necessary for the electrical impulses that drive our hearts, muscles, brain and nerves (<http://healthyeating.sfgate.com/much-sodium-bad-5322.html>).

The majority of sodium is in our blood and in body tissues, external to the cells that make up the body. The U.S. Institute of Medicine recommends that healthy adults consume no more than 2,300 milligrams of sodium daily, the equivalent of a teaspoon of table salt. People with high blood pressure or at risk for heart disease should limit sodium to 1,500 milligrams per day (<http://healthyeating.sfgate.com/much-sodium-bad-5322.html>).

### High Blood Pressure

Sodium draws water to it, due to its electrical charge. Substantial evidence

### Sodium Reduction Is Challenging

- **Types of food matter:** More than 40% of the sodium we eat each day comes from just 10 types of foods, ranging from the number 1 source—breads and rolls—to snack foods, which are 10th on the list.

- **Sources of food matter:** About 65% of sodium comes from food bought at retail stores, where you can look for lower sodium choices. About 25% comes from foods made in restaurants, where it can be difficult to see how much sodium is in your meal.

- **Brands of food matter:** Different brands of the same foods may have different sodium levels. For example, sodium in chicken noodle soup can vary by as much as 840 mg per serving.

### Sodium Is Everywhere

- Foods that otherwise seem healthy may have high levels of sodium. Examples include cottage cheese and turkey breast deli meat.
- Some foods that you eat several times a day, such as bread, add up to a lot of sodium even though each serving is not high in sodium.
- Sodium is already part of processed foods when you purchase them, and it cannot be removed.
- Sodium content can surprise you. For example, before it arrives at the grocery store, raw chicken and pork can be injected with a sodium (or saline) solution which increases sodium content significantly.
- Many restaurant meals are high in sodium.

Food	Sodium Range (in milligrams)
1 slice white bread	80 - 230
3 oz turkey breast, deli or pre-packaged luncheon meat	450 - 1,050
4 oz slice frozen pizza, plain cheese, regular crust	370 - 730
4 oz slice restaurant pizza, plain cheese, regular crust	510 - 760
4 oz boneless, skinless chicken breast, fresh	40 - 330
3 oz chicken strips, restaurant, breaded	430 - 900
3 oz chicken nuggets, frozen, breaded	200 - 570
1 cup chicken noodle soup, canned prepared	100 - 940
1 corn dog, regular	350 - 620
1 cheeseburger, fast food restaurant	710 - 1,690
1 oz slice American cheese, processed (packaged or deli)	330 - 460
1 cup canned pasta with meat sauce	530 - 980
5 oz pork with barbecue sauce (packaged)	600 - 1,120
1 oz potato chips, plain	50 - 200



exists to firmly establish that high sodium intake causes high blood pressure. As our hearts work against this pressure, it fatigues, grows larger and eventually stops functioning, resulting in heart disease. High blood pressure also damages many other organs in the body  
(<http://healthyeating.sfgate.com/much-sodium-bad-5322.html>)

**References**

- 1. The U.S. Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, Section 201, Chapter II, (gg).**
- 2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture. What We Eat in America. NHANES 2011-2012. Agricultural Research Service Website.**

**Thank you CDC for this very informative blog content!**