

# LESS SALT FOR TEENS MEANS HEALTHIER ADULTS

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By Debra Sherman

CHICAGO (Reuters) - If teens could reduce their daily salt consumption by 3,000 milligrams, they would cut their risk for heart disease and stroke significantly in adulthood, researchers said on Sunday.

Based on results of a computer modeling analysis, researchers projected that a 3,000-milligram reduction in sodium by teenagers could reduce hypertension by 30 percent to 43 percent when they become adults.

Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is a common condition that may have no symptoms for years, but can eventually cause serious health conditions, including heart attack and stroke.

Other benefits over time as teens hit 50 years of age include a 7 percent to 12 percent reduction in coronary heart disease, an 8 percent to 14 percent reduction in heart attacks, and a 5 percent to 8 percent reduction in stroke, according to data presented at the scientific sessions at the American Heart Association meeting in Chicago this week.

The American Heart Association recommends limiting sodium intake to 1,500 milligrams. Teenagers consume more than 3,800 milligrams -- more than any other group.

Processed food typically contains too much sodium. One bag of Nacho Cheese Doritos has 310 milligrams. Pizza is one of the biggest problems for teens when it comes to sodium, according to data from the National Center for Health Statistics.

"The additional benefit of lower salt consumption early is that we can hopefully change the expectations of how food should taste, ideally to something slightly less salty," said Dr. Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, the lead author of the study and associate professor of medicine and epidemiology at the University of California, San Francisco.

"Most of the salt we eat is not from our salt shaker, but salt that is already added in food that we eat," she added.

(Reporting by Debra Sherman; Editing by Marguerita Choy)