



Knowledge, attitude and behaviour towards salt in Greece

Nutrition Policy and Research Directorate

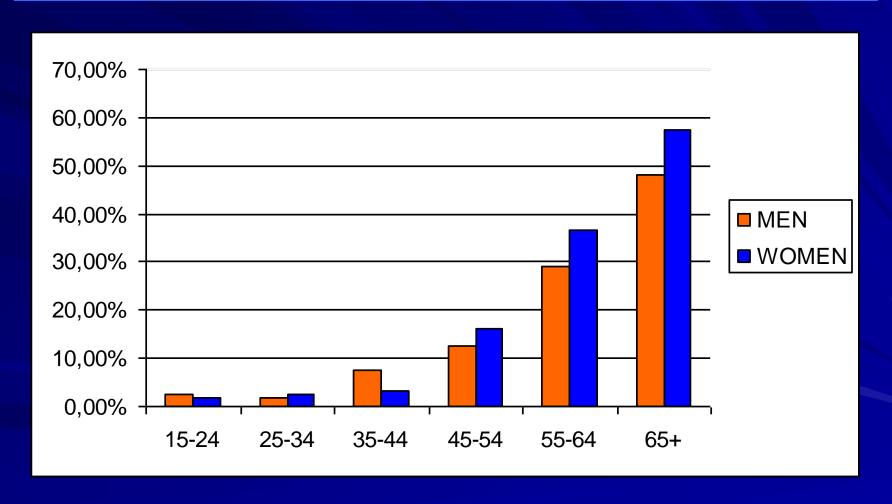
Hellenic Food Authority – EFET

Hypertension rates in Greece

According to our National Health Survey conducted by the Hellenic Statistical Authority (EL.STAT. - 2009) one in five Greek citizens aged 15 y and over, reported to suffer from hypertension. The percentages of Greek men and women with hypertension are 17.7% and 22.5% respectively.

Source: EL.STAT. - National Health Survey: Year 2009

Prevalence of reported hypertension by age and gender



Lines of actions

Raising consumer awareness

Reformulation of processed products high in salt

+ encouraging food service providers to reduce salt content of meals

Leaflet for consumers for raising awareness



Hellenic Food Authority

SALT CONSUMPTION

Nutrition Policy and Research Directorate

General information

Salt has deep roots in "Greek cuisine" since the times when the Greek households had limited ways available to preserve and add flavour to their food. Refrigeration and freezing have reduced the need to use salt for the preservation of food, but the preference of consuming highly salted food has maintained through the genera-

Adverse effects of excessive salt intake: A high salt intake is associated with the development of high blood pressure. People with high blood pressure have a higher risk of developing coronary heart disease, especially stroke, compared to those with normal blood pressure. Salt is a chemical compound consisting of 40% of sodium (Na) be achieved only by simply not and 60% chlorine (CI) i.e. 1g of salt is equivalent to 0.4g of sodium. Sodium is the element implicated in hypertension. Moreover. while sodium is not carcinogenic in itself, high salt intake may increase the risk of stomach cancer in combination with other factors such as for example infection with Helicobacter pylori.

There is a common misconception that a low salt/sodium intake can

adding extra salt at the table. Apart from table salt many foods contain hidden added salt or sodium. Investigations in European countries have shown that 70-75% of sodium in our diet comes from processed foods and meals away from home (with a 10-15% coming from natural unprocessed food and a 10-15% coming from salt added at the table or during cooking).

How much salt per day is recommended by experts?

The minimum amount of sodium that a healthy adult needs is estimated to be 0.18-0.23g per day (under conditions of maximal adaptation and without sweating). However, a diet that provides this amount of sodium is unlikely to be sufficient to meet the needs of other nutrients Therefore to ensure adequate intake of other nutrients and to replace sodium losses in sweat. healthy adults generally need about 1.5g of sodium per day which corresponds to 3.8q of salt daily. Because it is difficult to achieve such an intake - since



average salt intake in most European countries is around 8-11g daily a more realistic recommendation by international organizations and national authorities is in the range of 5-6g of salt a day.

Children younger than 11 years should consume even less than 6g salt a day.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) proposed a labeling reference intake of 6g for salt for the general population. The World Health Organization has set a target of less than 5g of salt a day. Greece follows the recommendations of the World Health Organization. The amount of 5a equals to one teaspoon.

EFET

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How do I know if a food is high in salt/sodium?



Read the labels on packaged foods to find foods lower in salt.

If a food contains more than 0.6g of sodium (or 1.5g of salt) per 100g, then it is high in sodium/salt.

If a food contains 0.1g of sodium (or 0.3g of salt) or less per 100g, then it is low in sodium/salt

If the amount of salt per 100g is between these values, then the food contains a medium level of salt

A food which contains not more than 0.04q of sodium or an equivalent amount of salt per 100g or 100 ml is "very low in sodium/salt".

A food which contains no more than 0.005g of sodium or an equivalent amount of salt per 100g or 100 ml is "sodium/salt free".

Remember that the amount you eat of a certain food has an impact on how much salt you will get from it.

Practical advice on reducing intake of salt/sodium

Remove the salt shaker from the table and do not add salt be- In particular, be careful when When you cook pasta or rice, do fore you taste the food.

Use spices and herbs (e.g. dill, oregano, rosemary, bay leaves) in order to enhance the flavour of foods. You can also sprinkle fresh lemon on cooked meat and vegetables.

Try to eat more fresh raw foods. Frozen fresh vegetables that have not undergone any treatment, do not contain extra salt.

When shopping, remember to read the labels of the packaged food you choose. The supply of foods low in sodium is now easier than before. Look for foods low in sodium

choosing sauces and "instant" products which may have high sodium content. Attention should also be paid to cured meats, cheeses, pickles and pastries with high sodium con-

Rinse canned foods preserved in brine, before eating.

Rinse olives and feta cheese, which are traditionally used when preparing a Greek salad.

At taverns and restaurants ask not to add salt to your dish (e.g. French fries, grilled meat/fish and not add salt to boiling water.



Methodology



- Questionnaire
- containing 17 questions
- Sample selected by the National Statistics Office (EL.STAT.)
- sample nationally representative of adults aged 25 y and over (children & adolescents were excluded)
- Anonymous

Questionnaire

γνωσείς, τη στασή και τη συμπεριφορά σχετικά με το αλάτι
Φύλο: □ Άντρας □ Γυναίκα
HAIKIG: 0 25-34 0 36-44 0 45-54 0 55-64 0 65-74 0 75-
Επίπεδο μόρφωσης: 🗆 δημοτικό 🔝 γυμνάσιο 🗀 λύκειο 🗀 ΑΕΙ/ΤΕΙ
Ημερομηνία συμπλήρωσης ερωτηματολογίου://
 Όταν μαγειρεύετε, βάζετε αλάτι στο φαγητό; (μαρκάρετε μια απάντηση) Πάντα (σε όλα τα γεύματα) Τις περιασότερες φορές (περιασότερα απά τα μισά γεύματα) Περιατασιακά (λιγότερα απά τα μισά γεύματα) Πατέ (σε κανένα γεύμα) Δεν γνωρίζω / Δεν μαγειρεύω
2. Όταν κάθεστε στο τραπέζι, προσθέτετε αλάτι στο φαγητό στο πιάτο; (μαρκάρετε μια απάντηση)
□ Πάντα (σε όλα τα γεύματα) □ Τις περισσότερες φορές (περισσότερα από τα μισά γεύματα)
 Τις περισσότερες φορές (περισσότερα από τα μισά γεύματα) Περιστασιακά (λιγότερα από τα μισά γεύματα)
🗖 Πολύ σπάνια
🗖 Ποτέ (σε κανένα γεύμα)
3. Υπάρχει μέγιστη ημερήσια ποσότητα αλατιού που συστήνουν οι ειδικοί <u>για τους</u>
ενήλικες: (μαρκάρετε μια απάντηση)
□ Naι □ Όχι □ Δεν γνωρίζω
3.α Εάν Ναι, ποια είναι αυτή η ποσότητα;
 Τα <u>παιδιά</u> πιστεύετε ότι πρέπει να καταναλώνουν: (μαρκάρετε μια απάντηση)
5. Υπάρχει σχέση μεταξύ αλατιού και νατρίου; □ Ναι □ Όχι □ Δεν γνωρίζω
5.α Εάν ΝΑΙ παρακαλώ διευκρινίστε:
 Πιστεύετε ότι μια διατροφή πλούσια σε αλάτι θα μπορούσε να προκαλέσει σοβαρά προβλήματα υγείας: (μαρκάρετε μια απάντηση) Ναι Όχι Δεν γνωρίζω

ΕΦΕΤ - Διεύθυνση Διατροφικής Πολιτικής και Ερευνών

Ερωτηματολόγιο αναφορικά με τις

7. Δισ	Εάν απαντήσατε ΝΑ: τροφή πλούσια σε αλάτ				
πολι	ύ πιθανώς καθι	όλου δεν γνω	ρίζω		
У ψη	λή αρτηριακή πίεση		_		
Пαу	(υσαρκία				
Оσт	εοπόρωση				
Καρι	κίνος στομάχου				
Πέτ	ρες στους νεφρούς				
Αυξ	ημένη χοληστερόλη στ	ο αίμα 🔲			
8.	Πόσο αλάτι νομίζετε	ότι καταναλώνετε	(µарка́рєтє µі	α απάντηση)	
	Υπερβολικά πολύ				
	Πολύ				
	Τη σωστή ποσότητα				
	Λίγο				
0	Πολύ λίγο Δεν ννωρίζω				
	Διεν γνωριζω				
9. διατ	Κατά τη γνώμη σας, τ ροφή ενός <u>ενήλικα</u> στη Αλάτι που προστίθετ Αλάτι που προστίθετ Ψωμί Τυριά Κρέας και αλλαντικά Δεν γνωρίζω	ιν Ελλάδα; (μαρκάρ αι στο τραπέζι	ετε μια απάντη	ത്വ)	ρινή
	Πόσο σημαντική για ικάρετε μια απάντηση)		η του αλατιού σ	τη διατροφή σα	Çi
□ K	αθόλου σημαντική	Λίγο σημαντι	κή [🗷 Πολύ σημαντ	ική
 Κάνετε κάτι από τα πορακάτω σε καθημερινή βάση προκειμένου να ελέγξετε την πρόαληψη αλατιού. (μπορείτε να μαρκάρετε περισσότερες από μια απαντήσεις) Αποφεύγω/ περιορίζω την κατανάλωση τυποποιημένων και επεξεργασμένων τροφίμων Κοιτάω τις ετικέτες τροφίμων 					
	Δεν προσθέτω αλάτι	στο τραπέζι			
	Αγοράζω τρόφιμα χα				
	Αγοράζω αλάτι χαμη				
	Δεν προσθέτω αλάτι				
	Χρησιμοποιώ μπαχαρ				
	Ξαρμυρίζω τις τροφέ		ιι σε άλμη		
	Αποφεύγω να τρώω				
	Δεν κάνω τίποτα απ	ό τα παραπάνω			

1	 Πως αξιολογείτε <u>γενικά</u> τα γεύματα που διατίθενται στα ε καντίνες ως προς την περιεκτικότητά τους σε αλάτι: (μαρι Εχουν πολύ λήγο αλάτι Εχουν σχετικά λήγο αλάτι Εχουν σχετικά λήγο αλάτι Εχουν σχετικά λήγο αλάτι Εχουν την σωστή ποσότητα αλατιού Εχους κατε ά αλάτι Εχουν πάρα πολύ αλάτι 	
3.	3. Διαβάζετε τις διατροφικές πληροφορίες στη συσκευασία τω (μαρκάρετε μια απάντηση) Πάντα Πάντα Περισσότερες Αγγότερες από τις μισές φορές Ποτέ	ν τροφίμων; από τις μισές φορές
4.	4. Ποιο από τα παρακάτω θα προτιμούσατε να αναγράφεται στ Αλάτι Νάτριο Αλάτι και Νάτριο □	
5.	5. Θα προτιμούσατε στις ετικέτες των τροφίμων να αναγράφει νατρίου ανά: □ μερίδα □ 100γρ ή 100 ml □ Δεν γνι	
6.	 6. Θα θέλατε στις ετικέτες των τροφίμων να αναγράφεται το ο ποσοστό της συνιστώμενης ημερήσιας πρόσληψης; Ναι Δεν γνωρίζω 	ιλάτι/ νάτριο ως
7.	7. Τι από τα παρακάτω θα επιθυμούσατε να είναι υποχρεωτικ ι επισήμανση σχετικά με το αλάτι (στις ετικέτες / πακέτο) τυποποιημένα τρόφιμα ξεκάθαρη ε <u>ιδική ένδειξη</u> σε τρόφιμα υψηλά σε αλάτι / νάτ ι επισήμανση σχετικά με το αλάτι στα μενού/ καταλόγους τ	σε <u>όλα</u> τα :ριο

τίποτα από τα παραπάνω

Demographic characteristics of the sample

- Total number of respondents: 3609
- Gender distribution: 347.9%, \$52.1%
- Age distribution: 25-34 y: 18.5%

35-44 y: 19.8%

45-54 y: 18.2%

65-74 y: 17.3%

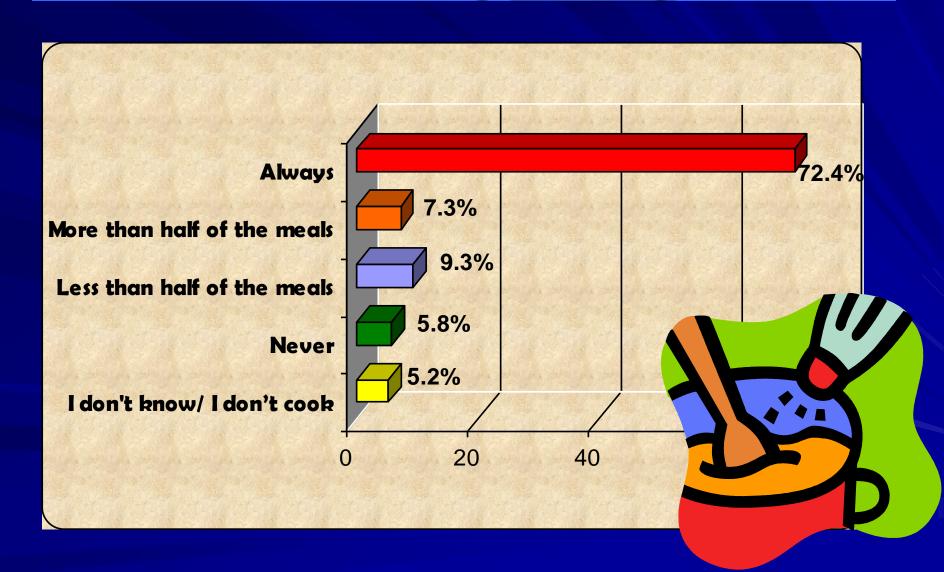
75+ y: 12.3%

■ Education: primary 23.3%

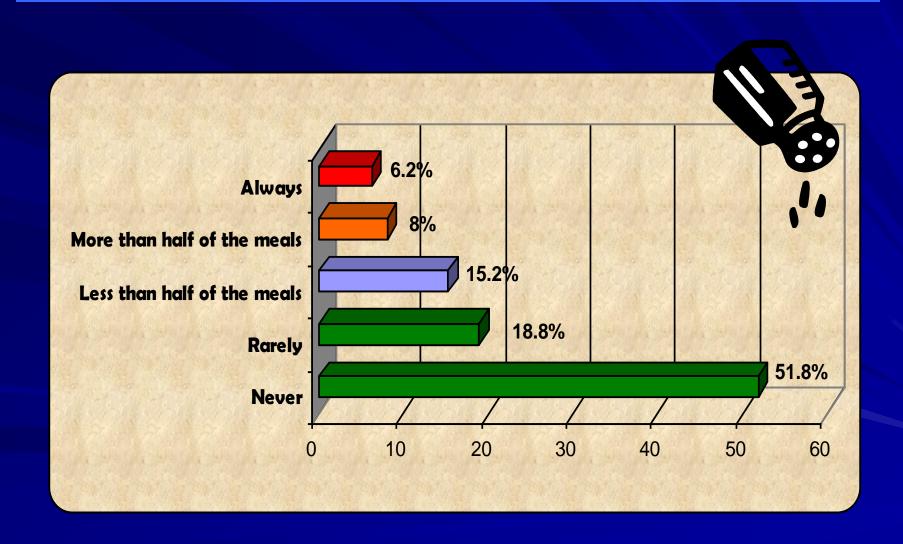
secondary/lyceum 42.4%

university 33.9%

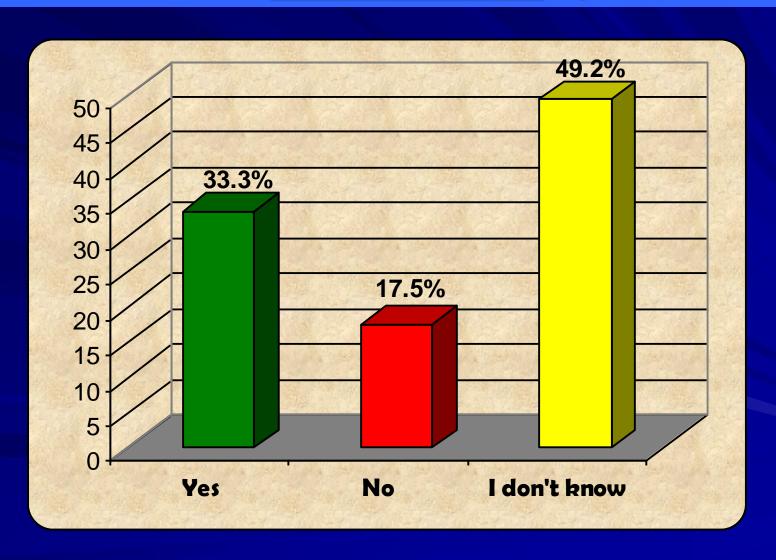
Do you add salt to the food you eat at home during cooking?



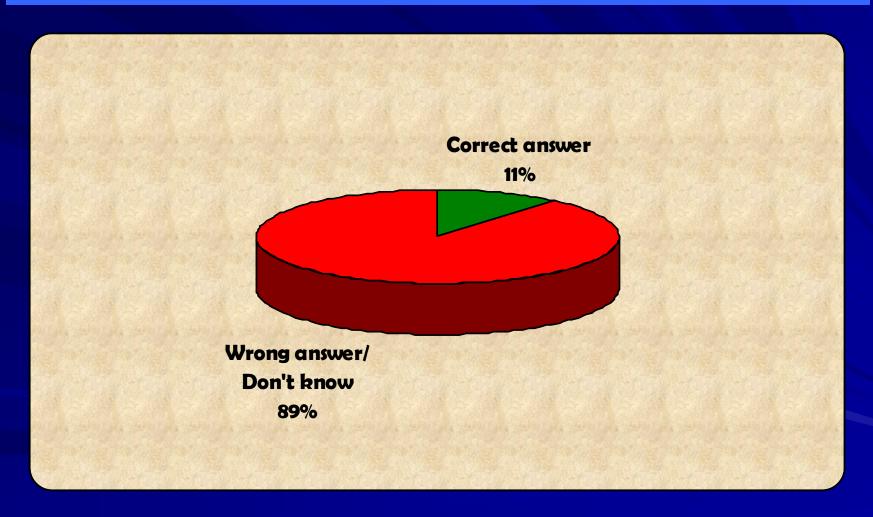
At the table, do you add salt to food?



Do you know if there is a max daily intake of salt for adults recommended by experts?



What is the max daily intake for adults as recommended by experts?



Data based on those who said that they know that there is a max recommended daily intake of salt

Do you think children should eat:

10.8% More salt than adults

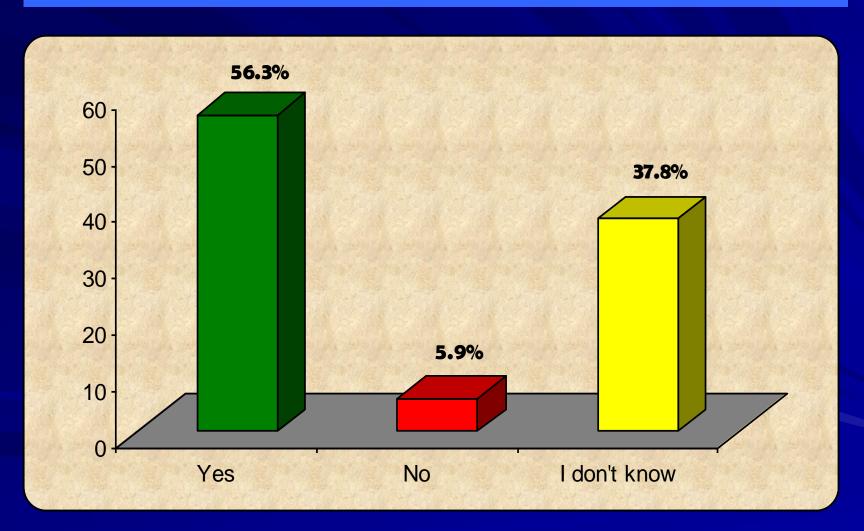
15.7% Same amount of salt as adults

63.9% Less salt than adults

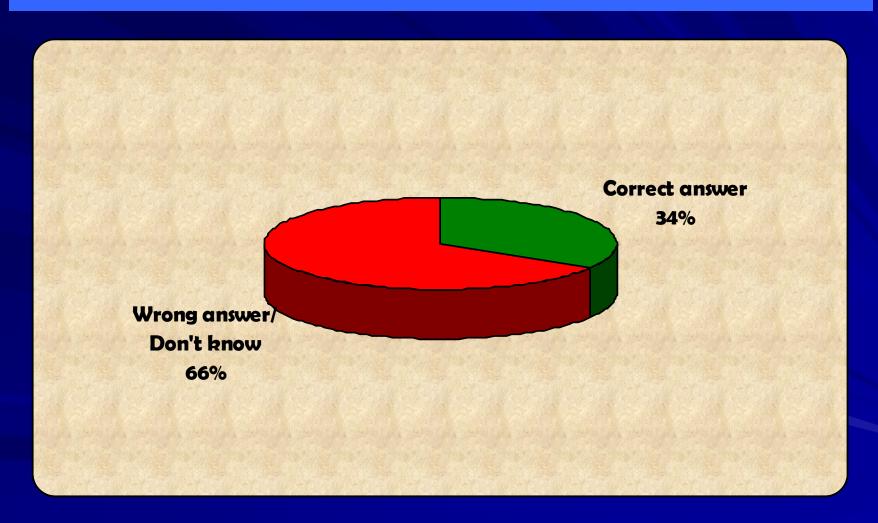
9.6% I do not know



Is there a relationship between salt and sodium?

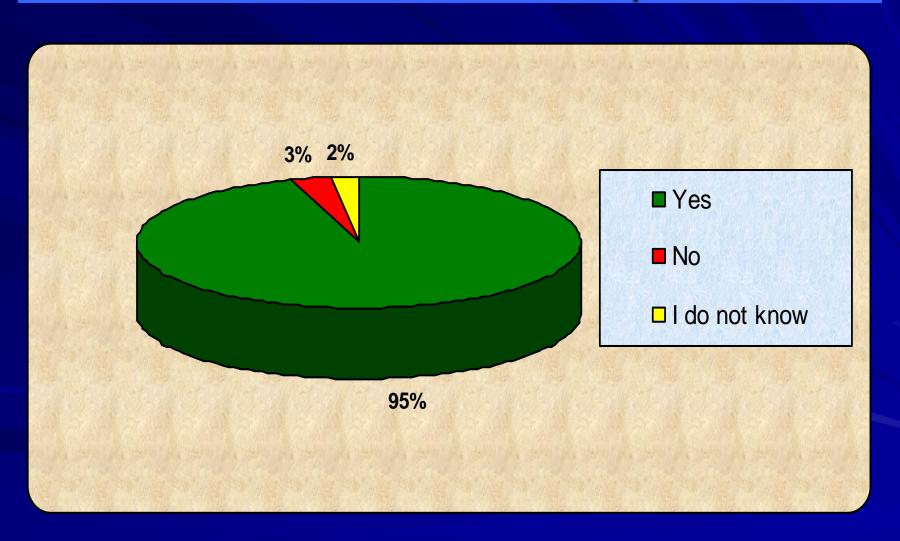


What is the relationship between salt and sodium?

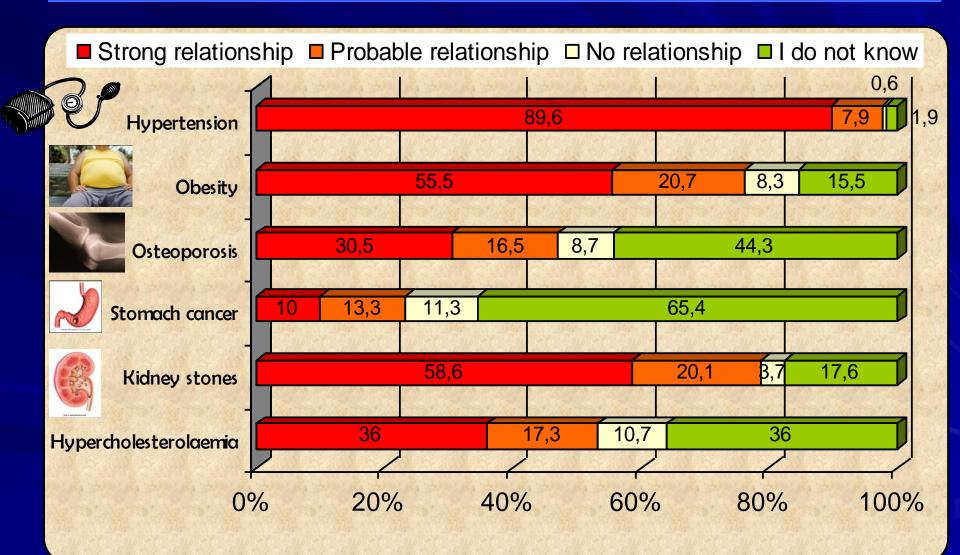


Data based on those who said that they know that there is a relationship between salt and sodium

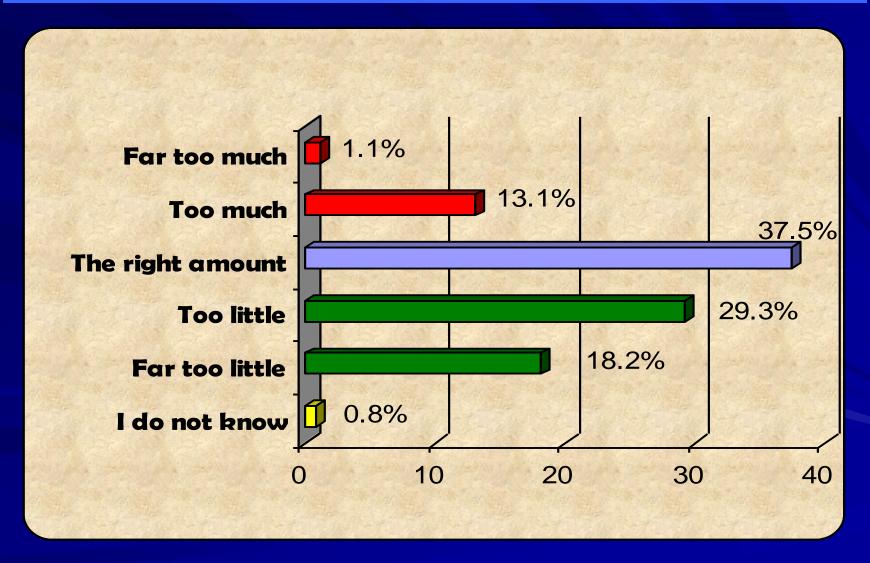
Do you think that a diet high in salt could cause serious health problems?



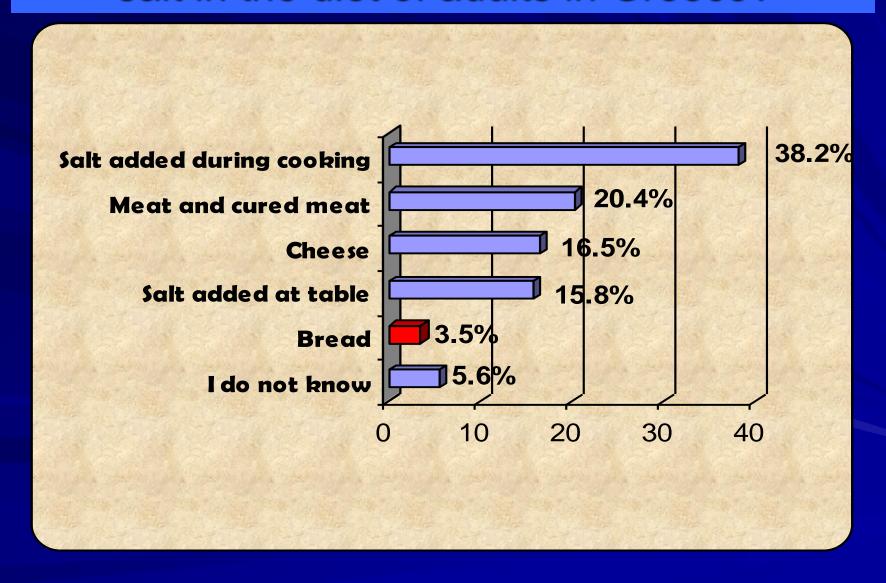
Belief of relationships between a diet high in salt and various pathological conditions



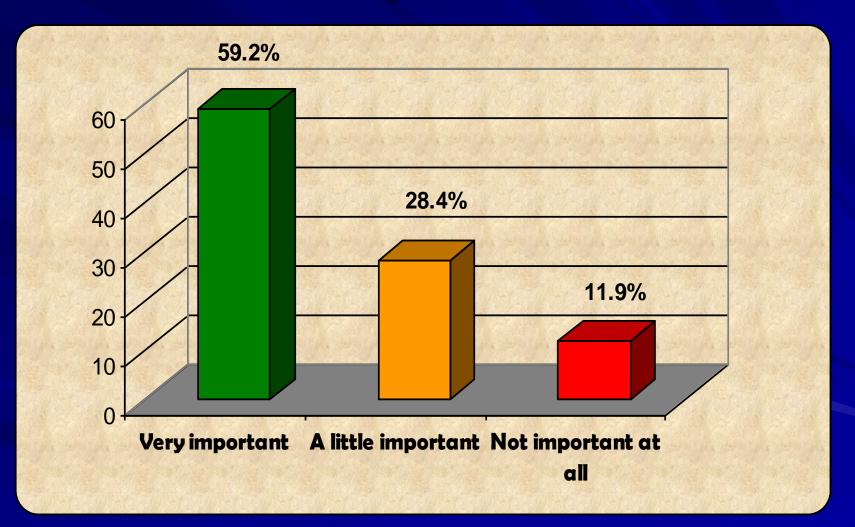
How much salt do you think you consume?



In your opinion, which is the major source of salt in the diet of adults in Greece?



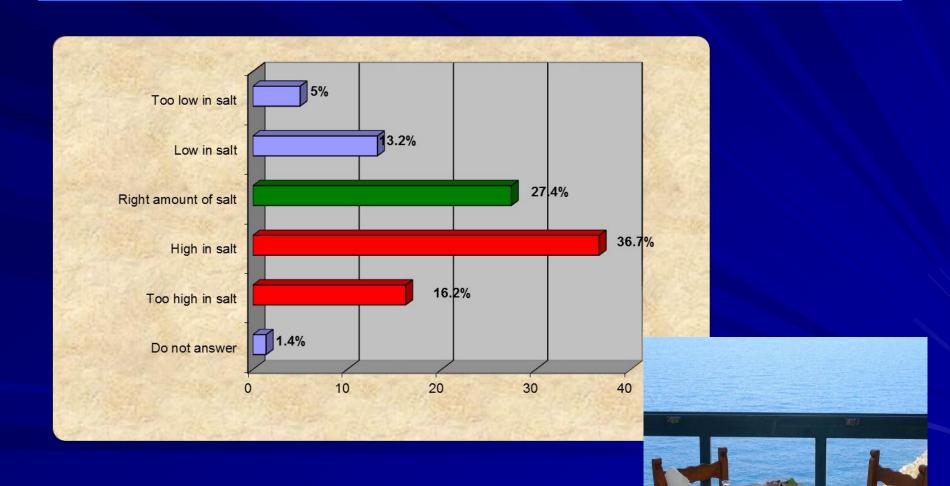
How important to you is lowering salt in your diet?



Actions taken to control salt intake

77.6%	Avoid/limit consumption of processed/packaged food
70.4%	Rinse food preserved in brine
57.9%	Do not add salt at the table
54.9%	Read food labels
48.7%	Avoid eating out of home
38.0%	Buy food low in salt
30.9%	Use herbs and spices during cooking instead of salt
18.1%	Buy salt low in Na
13.8%	Do not add salt during cooking
4.5%	I do not do anything of the above

How do you rate the dishes served in restaurants/ taverns/ canteens in terms of their salt content?



Do you read the nutrition declaration on the package of foods?

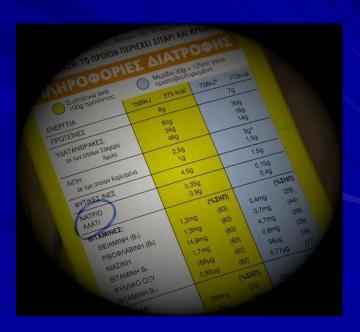
24.7% Always

23.9% More than half of the time

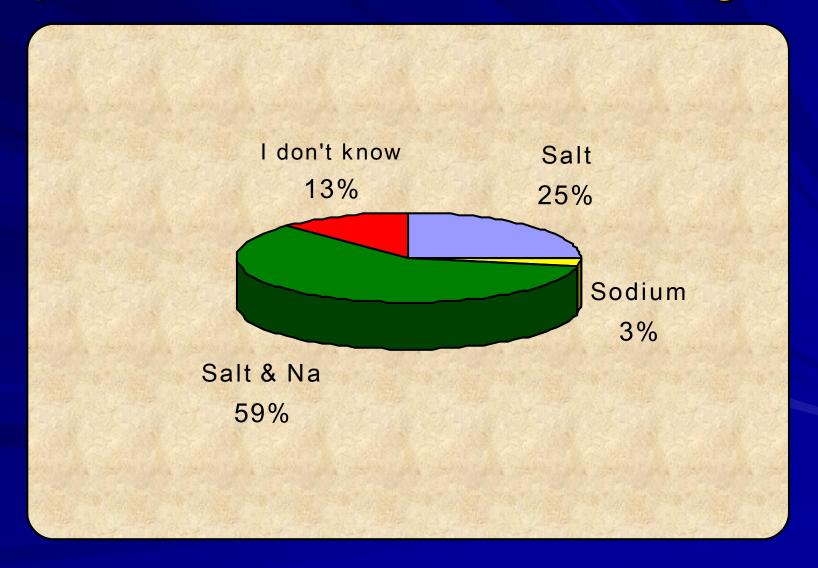
22.7% Less than half of the times

28.3% **Never**

0.4% I do not answer

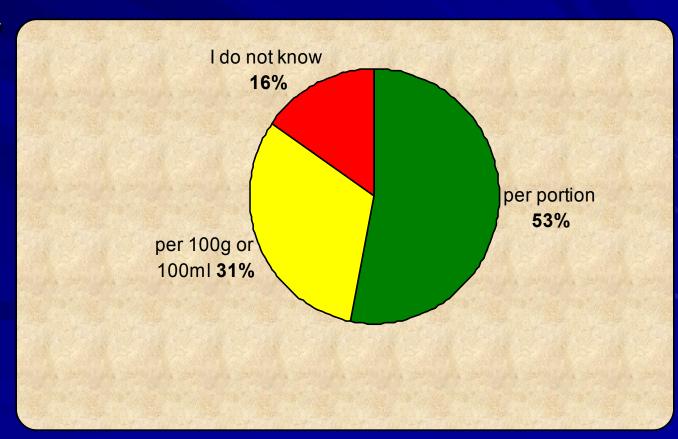


Which of the following would you prefer on the nutrition labeling?



On food labels, would you prefer the quantity of Salt/Na to be indicated in terms of:

- Portion size
- Per 100 g or 100 ml
- I do not know



Which of the following would you prefer to be mandatory:

56.7%	Salt content indication on all packaged food
58.2%	Clear specific indication "high in salt" on foods high in salt
35.8%	Salt labeling in restaurant menus
8%	Nothing of the above

Conclusions (preliminary)

- Awareness needs to be raised regarding:
 - cooking without adding salt
 - reading food labels
- Bread is not perceived by Greeks to be a significant source of salt in the diet – raising awareness of the "hidden Na sources" + work together with bakers to reduce salt in bread
- Many Greeks perceive the food eaten out of home as salty - work needs to be initiated in catering section, restaurants, taverns

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- Pan American Health Organization (Barbara Legowski, Branca Legetic)
- Consumers International (Hubert Linders)
- MARC A.E. (T. Gerakis, E. Geraki)