



## NEWS RELEASE

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# **New Medical Study: Reduced Sodium Linked to Deaths**

## ***More Evidence Government Should Halt War on Salt***

WASHINGTON, May 3, 2011 – Medical research has again confirmed that cutting back on salt is hazardous to your health. A new, government-funded study in the Journal of the American Medical Association finds that even modest reductions in salt intake are associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and death.

The study debunks claims by the Food and Drug Administration and others pushing for population-wide reductions in salt consumption. In addition, the increased risk of death was evident within the range recommended by the U.S. government's Dietary Guidelines on sodium, which means U.S. citizens who follow the dietary guidelines on sodium will be at risk.

“We now know conclusively that the U.S. government's war on salt consumption will cause harm,” said Lori Roman, president of the Salt Institute. “This study confirms previous research indicating that reductions in sodium lead to an increased risk of disease and death. Therefore, we call on government agencies to stop their population-wide sodium reduction agenda and amend the Dietary Guidelines on sodium. We simply ask them to ‘First, do no harm.’”

The study in the May 4 edition of JAMA concludes that lower sodium is associated with higher mortality. “Taken together, our current findings refute the estimates of computer models of lives saved and health care costs reduced with lower salt intake. They do also not support the current recommendations of a generalized and indiscriminate reduction of salt intake at the population level,” wrote the authors.

This is not the first study challenging the conventional wisdom of the anti-salt movement. Other studies show:

### **Low-Salt Diet Leads to Higher Mortality**

[An examination](#) of the largest US federal database of nutrition and health (NHANES), published in the Journal of General Internal Medicine, found a higher rate of cardiac events and death with

patients put on low-salt diets -- a result perfectly consistent with the latest study.

### **Risk of Diabetes**

A [2010 Harvard study](#) linked low-salt diets to an increase in insulin resistance, the condition that is a precursor to Type 2 Diabetes. Recent studies out of Australia show that individuals with [type I](#) or [type II](#) diabetes die in much greater numbers when placed on a salt restricted diet.

### **Falls, Cognitive Problems, Among Elderly**

Because of declining renal function in the aging body, the kidneys retain less sodium. Recent studies have shown that elderly people with hyponatremia have more [falls and broken hips](#) and a [decrease in cognitive abilities](#).

### **Low Birth Weights, Poor Brain Development**

A [2007 study](#) found that babies with low birth weight are also born with low sodium in their blood serum because their mothers were on low-salt intakes. [Another study](#) found that infants with low sodium may be predisposed to poor neurodevelopmental function between the ages of 10 and 13.

### **No Link Between Hypertension, Salt, in U.S. Population**

If salt consumption and hypertension were linked, both would be rising. But a [2010 paper](#) by two Harvard researchers shows that while hypertension has increased among Americans over the last 40 years, sodium consumption has remained flat.

*About the Salt Institute: [The Salt Institute](#) is the world's foremost source of authoritative information about salt (sodium chloride). Based in Alexandria, Virginia, the Salt Institute is a trade association dedicated to advocating responsible uses of salt, particularly to ensure winter roadway safety, water quality and nutrition.*