

SHOPSMART[®]

NO HYPE + NO ADS + JUST GREAT BUYS!

from **ConsumerReports** February/March 2009

healthy choices;)

Salt shakedown

Which lower-sodium versions of some favorite foods are worth buying and which are just plain yucky

If you're trying to eat a more healthful diet, cutting back on salt is a good first step. Too much sodium might increase your blood pressure, which can lead to heart attack, kidney disease, and stroke. It can also help trigger osteoporosis, kidney stones, and asthma. But lower-sodium foods can taste pretty bland. So we tested a few that tend to have a lot of sodium in regular versions—pasta sauce, salad dressing, turkey-breast lunch meat from

the deli, and chicken-noodle soup—to see if we could find any worth buying. In addition to measuring sodium levels in our labs, we put our trained taste testers and about 100 staffers on the case. Just because a label says “no salt added” doesn't mean there's no sodium; it means only that no salt was added in processing. Also, dietary guidelines recommend healthy adults get no more than 2,300 milligrams of sodium a day, or about a teaspoon of table salt.



PASTA SAUCE

Overall, this was the least liked category of lower-sodium foods we tried. Although just 43 percent of staffers said they'd eat **Enrico's Traditional Pasta Sauce No Salt Added** again, it got the highest marks of the four products we tried. Our expert tasters describe it as a smooth red sauce with a touch of heat. The jar lists 25 mg of sodium per half-cup serving, but two out of three jars our lab analyzed had about 160 mg and 250 mg. We also tried Francesco Rinaldi No Salt Added Traditional, Trader Giotto's Organic Marinara No Salt Added Low Fat, and Walnut Acres Organic Low Sodium Fat Free Tomato and Basil.



BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE

Staffers were more positive about this category. They tried four vinaigrettes. The highest percentage, 65 percent, said they'd eat **The Silver Palate Salad Splash Balsamic Country** again. It's an oily balsamic vinaigrette with garlic, herb, and olive-oil flavor. It has just 15 mg of sodium per 2-tablespoon serving, the least of any we tasted, but a hefty 16 g of fat. We also tried Emeril's Balsamic Vinaigrette, Maple Grove Farms of Vermont Balsamic Vinaigrette with Pure Maple Syrup, and Annie's Naturals Balsamic Vinaigrette. Only 25 percent said they would eat Annie's again.



CHICKEN-NOODLE SOUP

Only about half of our staffers said they'd eat any of the lower-sodium soups again. Fifty-three percent said they'd eat **Progresso 50% Less Sodium Chicken Noodle Soup**. Our pros said it had a mild flavor and some chewy chicken chunks but mushy vegetables. The two other soups we tasted—Campbell's Select Harvest Healthy Request and Healthy Choice Old Fashioned—were nearly as well-liked. All three had 470 or 480 mg of sodium per 1-cup serving, which is high but a lot less than the nearly 1,000 mg in Progresso Traditional Chicken Noodle Soup.



TURKEY BREAST

This category was the most liked overall. Seventy-eight percent of our testers said they'd eat **Dietz & Watson Gourmet Lite Breast of Turkey** (skin on) again, describing it as moist and tender with a roasted-turkey flavor. It has 240 mg of sodium per 2-ounce serving. Boar's Head Our Premium Lower Sodium (skinless), Butterball Oven Roasted Reduced Sodium (skinless), and **Applegate Farms Oven Roasted (skin on) have 340 to 400 mg.** That's a good amount but not as much as what's in the regular variety. Hillshire Farm Deli Select UltraThin Oven Roasted Turkey has 620 mg per serving.