

Blueprints for Change

TO SALT OR NOT TO SALT ... THAT IS THE QUESTION!

Most people are aware that excessive salt in the diet is a problem. Too much constricts circulation, causes the kidneys to retain fluid and can increase the incidences of migraines. The body does, however, need a certain amount of sodium to exist and to function properly. While certain salt-sensitive individuals must limit their intake, most people do not suffer ill effects when they use salt sensibly in the diet. In my opinion, sensibly using salt means using **UNREFINED** salt.

Commercially **refined salt** is 97.5% sodium chloride and approximately 2.5% chemical additives such as aluminum silicate to keep it powdery and porous. It has been robbed of the many different minerals and elements that are useful for the body. Additionally, it is refined under high compression and heat which disrupts its molecular structure. Iodine is added to prevent goiter (swelling of the thyroid), however generally in not enough quantity to prevent thyroid illnesses. The human body does not like refined salt!

Why is salt refined you may ask? The answer ...

- To maximize profits for food manufacturers. Being robbed of all its minerals, it is essentially “dead” and therefore has an indefinite shelf life.
- As a bleached product it is white and therefore, theoretically, looks cleaner to the consumer.
- The refining process removes any toxins if the salt is taken from a polluted area.

Unrefined salt is 84% sodium chloride and 16% other minerals. It is harvested either from the sea, (Celtic Sea Salt®), or mined from inland salt deposits (Redmond’s Real Salt®). In either case, the salt is a naturally occurring product of sodium chloride, major minerals such as calcium and magnesium, and numerous other essential trace minerals. The body recognizes, and was designed to use, this form of salt.

In the body, salt is as important to humans as water is to fish. In combination with potassium, it regulates the acid-alkaline balance in our blood, regulates blood pressure, transmits nerve impulses and maintains muscle activity. It helps keep body PH balanced. Sodium keeps glands and organs healthy and produces hydrochloric acid so we can digest our food. Not enough sodium leads to lack of energy, “sluggish” blood and fuzzy thinking because the brain depends on good fluid circulation.

Beware of “Sea Salt” labels. These generally mean that although the salt originally came from the sea, it has been refined and adulterated by chemical additives. Look for salt that is a grey, off-white or a pink color and is **UNREFINED**. My favorite salt, Celtic Sea Salt®, comes from Brittany in the northwest of France where the cold, active, North Sea currents, large tides and other marine and climatic conditions, offer a unique mix of minerals. It has nothing taken out or added and provides the body with a perfect balance of well absorbed minerals.

Try it! You may find that by using a healthier salt your immune system functions more efficiently, energy levels may increase and brain function may improve.

A note when cooking with unrefined salt - always add it at the end of cooking to balance and blend the flavors. It easily dissolves in the food.

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