Control of Salt Intake

Prelims – *Current events of national and international importance | General Science.*

Why in News?

Recently, UK study has shown that salt warning labels on restaurant menus and packaged foods significantly reduced consumer salt intake.

- **Need of salt –** Sodium (salt) is ***essential for the body*** to function properly.
- It helps in maintaining fluid balance, transmitting nerve impulses, and proper muscle function.
- **Prescribed intake limit –** The World Health Organization recommends the ***daily sodium intake below 2 g*** which translates about 5 g one whole teaspoon of salt a day.
- **Issues with excess intake –** Excess sodium consumption is increased risk of blood pressure and cardiovascular diseases such as heart attacks and strokes.

  Nearly 1.9 million deaths a year attributable to high sodium intake globally.

- **Guidelines by WHO –** It has asked countries to work towards reducing sodium consumption by **30 % by 2030**.
- It suggests using *little to no salt* on the table and partially replacing *table salt with low sodium salt* substitutes.
- **Low sodium salts –** It referred to as **K-salts** are those replace the sodium in the table salt (sodium chloride) with potassium.
  - Other compounds such as magnesium also be used.

- **Purpose –** To reduce sodium intake, especially in people who have hypertension risk.
- They also increase potassium consumption, which is known to reduce blood pressure.

  Potassium comes from foods such as beans, peas, nuts, vegetables such as spinach and cabbage, and fruits such as bananas and papaya.

- **Measures to control intake –** UK has 4 different types of warning labels
  - Red triangle,
  - Black triangle,
  - Red octagon and
  - Black octagon - all claiming to be high in salt.
- Labels of foods buy at a supermarket or on restaurant menus can be an effective way of cutting daily salt intake.
- India is also considering *different types of front-of-pack labels* to reduce consumption of ultra-processed foods with high salt, sugar and fat content.

Reference

The Indian Express| Low Sodium Salts

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