Reducing Salt Intake

What is the issue?

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USA and 74 other countries have been advocating the lowering of salt intake

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What is the problem with salt?

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- Salt added to our foods by processors and restaurants is the main source of sodium in our diets.
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- While some studies have concluded that only people with hypertension need to reduce salt intake.
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- But most experts have called for comprehensive reductions by all.
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- Excess sodium is responsible for most cases of hypertension in Western societies.
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- Hypertension is a leading risk factor for heart attacks, strokes and kidney failure.
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What is the science behind?

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- Both sodium & chloride which make up salt are essential nutrients for the body.
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- Our kidneys are fine-tuned machines for keeping blood levels of sodium within a physiologically healthy range.
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- When there’s too much sodium on board, the kidneys dump it into urine for

excretion, and when more is needed, they reabsorb it.
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- Unfortunately, with a chronic excess of sodium to deal with, the kidneys can get worn out.
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- Sodium levels in the blood then rise along with water needed to dilute it, resulting in increased pressure on blood vessels (BP).
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What standards has the US fixed?

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- The recommended daily intake for healthy American adults is 2,300 milligrams of sodium a day.
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- Currently, an average American consumes more than 3,400 milligrams a day.
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- Notably, even a lunch of soup and a sandwich from a restaurant can easily add up to a day’s worth of sodium.
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- It is estimated that an average reduction of just 400 milligrams of sodium a day could save 28,000 lives and $7 billion in health-care costs annually.
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- Notably, wherever there has been an intake reduction, a decline in the rates of hypertension and cardiovascular disease is observed.
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What are some voices of dissent?

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- There is resistance from the food and restaurant industries, which fear that consumers will reject a change in recipes.
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- Also, consumers are sometimes wary of low-sodium products, thinking that they will lack flavour.
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Source: The Hindu

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