

# Reducing Salt Intake in the U.S. Could Save Tens of Thousands of Lives Each Year

**Heart attacks and strokes kill more than 850,000 people in the U.S. each year. Diets high in salt increase blood pressure, a leading risk factor for these events.**

↑ salt intake → ↑ blood pressure → ↑ risk of heart attack and stroke

## **Most people consume far too much salt.**

Most people eat twice the recommended limit of salt each day.

## **Reducing salt requires industry action.**

Almost 80% of salt in our diets comes from packaged and restaurant foods. This makes it very hard for even the most motivated person to limit salt intake.

## **Even people with normal blood pressure benefit from lowering their salt intake.**

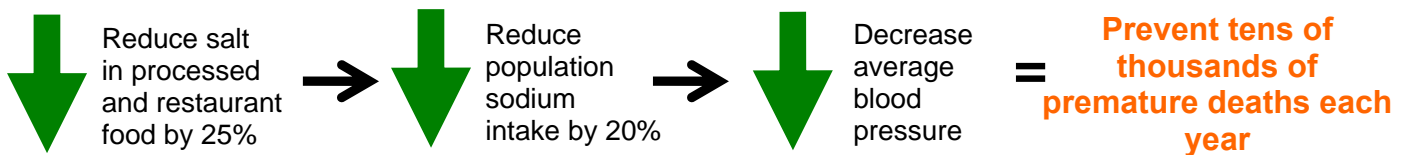
The health benefits start immediately – blood pressure decreases within weeks.

## **High blood pressure is the leading cause of US racial health disparities.**

Studies suggest that reducing salt intake is especially beneficial for blacks.

### **Goal**

**Reduce Americans' sodium intake by 20% over 5 years**



### **Progress to Date**

1. More than 40 cities, states and national health organizations have come together to create a National Salt Reduction Initiative.
2. The initiative has developed databases to assess the sodium content of packaged and restaurant foods, and monitor progress in reducing sodium levels.
3. In consultation with food industry leaders, the initiative has developed proposed targets for sodium reduction over a five-year period.

### **Moving Forward**

1. Finalize targets and secure industry commitments (Spring 2010).
2. Monitor industry achievements and population sodium intake.