

- Food—sodium content / Blood pressure

Too much salt may raise your blood pressure

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Most people are aware that too much salt is not good for you. Indeed, a high salt intake is a risk factor for both high blood pressure and stroke. Yet some people seem to have a salt tooth, just as people can have a sweet tooth.

I came across this interesting study from Brazil, which looked at whether people with a salt tooth, that is a preference for saltier food were more likely to have high blood pressure.

They looked at four separate groups of men and women, each with about 30 people in them. Two of the groups were people in their 30s. One group had normal blood pressure and the other had high blood pressure. They also looked at two groups in their 70s, one group with and one without high blood pressure.

All groups were offered three different types of French bread. Each of them contained different quantities of salt. There was a significant difference between the amounts of salt.

Interestingly, none of the people in either age group with normal blood pressure showed a preference for the salty bread. Instead, the older age group preferred the medium salted, while the younger age group preferred the lightly salted. The people with high blood pressure in both age groups preferred the saltiest bread.

Two weeks later the groups were randomly offered the same three breads and salt combinations. This time, though, the breads also were flavoured with oregano, which is a nonsalt herb. And this time, all groups opted for a lower salted bread.

This rather implies that people who have high blood pressure have a salt tooth. It may be that this is significant in helping to produce the high blood pressure over a long time. Yet the interesting thing is that by using herbs it is possible to overcome that salt desire, or to reduce the amount that one wants to have.

Why not try reducing that quantity, or remove the salt cellar from the table, especially if you have high blood pressure? Or, add herbs like oregano.