

CARDIOMETABOLIC · FREE GUIDE

The Sodium-Potassium Ratio Guide

Blood pressure responds to the balance between sodium and potassium, not to sodium alone. This guide shows where your sodium actually comes from, the daily ceilings behind it, a two-line ratio calculation, and the potassium-dense swaps that move the ratio without cooking from scratch.

Where sodium really comes from

Daily ceilings

2-line ratio calculation

22 potassium swaps

4-page A4 printable PDF

CLINICAL RATIONALE — WHY THIS SPECIFIC TOOL

Sodium holds fluid in the circulation; potassium helps the kidneys excrete it and relaxes vessel walls. A diet heavy in packaged food inverts the ratio our physiology evolved around — and the inversion tracks blood pressure more closely than either mineral on its own.

Your sodium is mostly not from your salt shaker. Around 70% of the sodium in a typical diet arrives already in processed and restaurant food; only about a tenth is added at the table. That means the ratio is decided in the supermarket aisle, not at dinner.

Potassium is the lever most people never pull. Hitting the potassium adequacy value is easier than cutting sodium to the floor, and every potassium-dense food improves the ratio from both directions. This is why the guide leans on swaps rather than restrictions.

The ratio is the number. Aiming for a sodium-to-potassium ratio below 1 — more potassium milligrams than sodium milligrams — is a simpler, more durable target than chasing a single mineral, and it is the pattern the DASH diet achieves.

AUTHORITY / EVIDENCE BASE	WHAT IT ESTABLISHES FOR THIS TOOL
Dietary Guidelines 2020–2025	Sodium ceiling of 2,300 mg/day for adults; AHA moves toward 1,500 mg/day.
NASEM (2019) adequacy values	Potassium adequacy of 3,400 mg/day for men and 2,600 mg/day for women.
Sodium-source surveys	Roughly 70% of dietary sodium comes from processed and restaurant food.
Ratio research	The Na:K ratio associates with blood pressure and cardiovascular risk more strongly than sodium or potassium alone.

2,300

MG SODIUM CEILING

Dietary Guidelines adult limit

1,500

MG AHA IDEAL

the target most adults move toward

3,400

MG POTASSIUM

men adequacy (2,600 women)

< 1.0

TARGET RATIO

more potassium mg than sodium mg

QUICK START — THE NEXT TEN MINUTES

- 1

Read the two ceilings

Sodium under 2,300 mg (toward 1,500), potassium toward 3,400/2,600 mg. Write your current best guess on page 2.
- 2

Find your three biggest sodium sources

Bread and baked goods, cured meat and cheese, and packaged sauces are the usual winners. Audit the pantry once.
- 3

Add two potassium foods a day

A potato, a cup of beans, an avocado or a banana each moves the ratio from both ends.
- 4

Re-run the ratio weekly

Two lines of arithmetic on page 2. Under 1.0 is the win; improvement week over week is the habit.

POTASSIUM IS NOT FREE-FOR-ALL FOR EVERYONE

If you have chronic kidney disease, or take an ACE inhibitor, an ARB, a potassium-sparing diuretic, or potassium supplements, do not pursue a high-potassium diet or salt substitutes (which are often potassium chloride) without your clinician — excess potassium can be dangerous in that setting. The ratio target still applies; how you reach it changes.

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THE ARITHMETIC

Where your sodium comes from, and your two-line ratio

The share table explains why willpower at the table rarely works. The worksheet turns your current intake into a single number you can move.

2,300

MG SODIUM CEILING

Dietary Guidelines adult limit

1,500

MG AHA IDEAL

the target most adults move toward

3,400

MG POTASSIUM

men adequacy; 2,600 for women

< 1.0

TARGET RATIO

more potassium mg than sodium mg

SOURCE	SHARE	WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU
Processed & restaurant food	~70%	Breads, cured meats, cheese, sauces, soups, ready meals — decided before you cook.
Naturally occurring	~15%	Milk, vegetables, meat and fish carry small amounts on their own.
Added at home	~11%	Cooking and table salt — the part you fully control.
Added elsewhere	~4%	Water softeners, some medications and antacids.

THE TWO-LINE RATIO CALCULATION

Line 1 — my typical daily sodium (mg)

Line 2 — my typical daily potassium (mg)

Ratio = Line 1 ÷ Line 2 (target below 1.0)

Worked example: sodium 3,400 ÷ potassium 2,600 = 1.3 — inverted. Add two potassium-dense foods from page 3 and remove your single largest packaged source, then re-run. Most people drop the ratio by a third within two weeks without cooking from scratch.

RATIO BELOW 1.0

Potassium outweighs sodium. The DASH pattern; hold this and re-check monthly.

RATIO 1.0–1.5

Near parity. Two potassium foods a day plus one packaged-source cut usually closes this in two weeks.

RATIO ABOVE 1.5

Inverted. Audit the big three packaged sources first, then rebuild the week around whole foods.

CUT THE BIG THREE FIRST

Bread and baked goods, cured meat and cheese, and packaged sauces and soups are the three largest packaged sources for most people. Swapping those three moves more sodium than everything else combined.

SALT SUBSTITUTES ARE POTASSIUM

"Light" salts and many salt substitutes are potassium chloride. They improve the ratio on paper but are a medication-level potassium load — see the caution on page 1 before using them, especially with kidney disease or ACE/ARB therapy.

My biggest packaged sodium source The swap I will use

THE LEVERS

Potassium-dense foods and the sodium swaps

Add from the left column, swap from the right. Every row improves the ratio from both directions.

POTASSIUM DENSITY (MG)		THE SODIUM SWAPS (MG)			
Baked potato with skin, 1 medium	926	INSTEAD OF	NA	CHOOSE	NA
Sweet potato, 1 medium	542	Deli turkey, 2 oz	370	Roast chicken, 2 oz	45
White beans, cooked, 1/2 cup	502	Canned soup, 1 cup	890	Low-sodium soup, 1 cup	140
Avocado, 1/2	487	Soy sauce, 1 tbsp	1000	Citrus, herbs, pepper	5
Coconut water, 1 cup	470	Canned beans, unrinsed, 1/2 cup	400	Canned beans, rinsed, 1/2 cup	150
Salmon, 3 oz	449	Pickles, 1 spear	300	Fresh cucumber	2
Banana, 1 medium	422	Bacon, 2 slices	380	Smoked-paprika chicken	60
Spinach, cooked, 1/2 cup	419	Processed cheese, 1 oz	400	Fresh mozzarella, 1 oz	85
Plain yogurt, 1 cup	380	Salted nuts, 1 oz	190	Unsalted nuts, 1 oz	0
Milk, 1 cup	366	Figures are typical single-serving values in milligrams of sodium; brands vary, so use them to rank swaps, not to audit a label.			
Lentils, cooked, 1/2 cup	365				
Tomato, 1 medium	292				
Orange, 1 medium	237				
Almonds, 1 oz	208				

Aim for three to four of these most days. Values are typical single servings.

BUILD A SUB-2,300 MG DAY

Breakfast — sodium (mg)

potassium source

Lunch — sodium (mg)

potassium source

Dinner — sodium (mg)

potassium source

Day total sodium

day total potassium

ratio

COMPARE IN MG PER 100 G, NOT PER SERVING

Serving sizes are chosen to flatter. Two loaves can show the same sodium per slice while one has twice the sodium per 100 g. Ranking packages by mg per 100 g is the only shelf comparison that cannot lie to you — and it is the method the full edition applies aisle by aisle.

THIS WEEK'S PLAN

POTASSIUM FOOD I WILL ADD (2)

PACKAGED SOURCE I WILL CUT (1)

Ratio this week

Ratio next week

Ready for the Complete Step-by-Step Blueprint?

This guide gives you the immediate tools to take action today. But long-term health requires a complete, structured daily system — one that tells you **what to do on the days this sheet does not cover**, in what order, and how to adjust when your body does not respond the way the chart says it should.

HEALTH SECRETS

Heart-Smart Grocery & Cooking System

Decode supermarket sodium, rebalance the sodium-to-potassium ratio, and cook twenty dinners that taste like something.

Clinical Practice Series · 44 pages · A4 print + fillable

Heart-Smart Grocery & Cooking System

Decode supermarket sodium, balance the sodium-to-potassium ratio, and cook vibrant meals without bland restrictions.

44 pages

Label Guide + 20 Formulas

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\$24 one-time

WHAT IS INSIDE THE FULL EDITION

- 1 The sodium-to-potassium ratio, explained** — the physiology of why the balance matters more than either mineral alone.
- 1 The salt-replacement matrix** — acid, heat, herb and umami routes to flavour that add no sodium.
- 1 An aisle-by-aisle label decoder** — mg per 100 g so you can compare a package against its shelf-neighbours objectively.
- 1 20 low-sodium dinners** — vibrant, high-potassium recipes that taste like something, with full macros.

THIS FREE TOOL VERSUS THE COMPLETE SYSTEM

What this free guide already gives you

- ☐ Where your sodium actually comes from, by share
- ☐ The ceilings and a two-line ratio calculation
- ☐ Fourteen potassium-dense foods and eight direct swaps

What only the 44-page edition has

- ☐ A full label decoder to compare any two packages objectively
- ☐ The salt-replacement matrix for flavour without sodium
- ☐ Twenty tested low-sodium dinners with macros and prep time
- ☐ A weekly grocery and cooking system that keeps the ratio under 1

Get the Complete Guide

AT [HEALTHSECRETS.COM/PRODUCTS/HEART-SMART-GROCERY-AND-COOKING-SYSTEM](https://healthsecrets.com/products/heart-smart-grocery-and-cooking-system)

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