

## *Salt - Good or Bad?*

That depends on what kind of salt we're talking about.

Almost all traditional cultures use salt. Cultures living far from the sea would burn sodium-rich marsh grasses and add the ash to their food. Salt is needed for: 1) the production of hydrochloric acid in the stomach to digest protein, 2) the activation of amylase to digest starches, 3) the proper function of the brain and nervous system, 4) healthy adrenal gland function so that our bodies cope well with life's stresses.

Early research pointed to a possible correlation between high blood pressure and salt intake, but later studies indicated that salt restriction could harm more people than it helps. In 1983, a study of 2.1 million adults indicated that dietary salt did not have a significant effect on blood pressure in the majority of individuals (\*). Salt deficiency can lead to a loss of taste, cramps, weakness and cardio-respiratory distress on exertion (\*\*).

What few people realize is that most salt sold in the U.S. – including most sea salt - is as highly processed as white sugar. It undergoes chemical and high-temperature processing, which disrupts natural salt's delicate lattice crystalline structure, and strips the natural salt of magnesium and 80 other essential minerals that help with sodium metabolism. Toxic aluminum compounds (associated with Alzheimer's and other neuro-degenerative diseases) are added to prevent caking.

In many parts of Europe, doctors will switch their patients with high blood pressure and heart problems from white, chemically processed salt to unrefined, sun-dried salt. Some of the best research on the health properties of unrefined salt is (unfortunately for Americans) written in French, German and Portuguese.

The most health-promoting salt is from seawater that is sun-dried in clay-lined ponds. (This is how salt has been historically processed, and is the kind of salt spoken of so favorably in the Bible). Its color indicates the high (16%) content of other essential minerals. Some of the purest available sources of unrefined salt are Celtic salt from the natural salt marshes of Brittany (available in Sequim at Sunny Farms), Himalayan Crystal Salt, and Red sea salt from Hawaii. These unrefined sea salts have the same mineral content as the blood plasma and lymphatic fluid of a healthy human or animal. Using these high-quality salts can reverse edema, decrease bronchial and sinus congestion, reduce allergies, improve digestion, and increase energy and immunity. Many notice a general improvement in health by drinking a pint or more of warm water with a teaspoon of Celtic or Himalayan crystal salt dissolved in it, first thing each morning for a period of time, or last thing at night for a better sleep.

(\*) Robert Holden et al, Dietary salt intake and blood pressure, JAMA, July 15, 1983.

(\*\*) R.A. McCance, Experimental sodium chloride deficiency in man, Nutrition Reviews, March 1990.

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