

# Low-Salt Diets Don't Cut Heart Risk

And unrefined salt can even make you healthier!

**B**elgian researchers recently discovered that people who eat lots of salt are not more at risk of getting high blood pressure or dying of heart disease compared to people with low-salt diets.

Guidelines issued by the U.S. government in January recommend that people consume less than 2,300 milligrams of salt a day, or 1,500 mg if you're over age 50.

The researchers followed 3,700 people for eight years and determined that eating high, medium, or low amounts of salt did not affect the chance of getting heart and blood vessel diseases. However, those with the lowest intake of salt had a 4 percent chance of dying from heart disease versus the less than 1 percent who ate the most salt.

"[Salt is] a very healthy substance for the body," says Dr. David Brownstein, Newsmax Health contributor and author of the book "Salt Your Way to Health." "The human body was designed to need and acquire unrefined salt."

Brownstein says that of the salt choices available — refined vs. unrefined — unrefined salt is the healthiest form. Unrefined salt, such as sea salt, is slightly colored and often sold in rock form rather

than ground. It contains more than 80 healthy minerals such as magnesium, and calcium. These minerals are removed when refined, white table salt is processed, and they are replaced by toxic heavy metals, including aluminum.

Refined table salt is a "toxic substance" that should be avoided, says Brownstein, editor of the "Natural Way to Health" newsletter.

Unrefined salt, "with its full complement of minerals," is a better choice than refined sea salt, kosher salt, and salt substitutes, he says. Unrefined salt should be a "vital ingredient in everyone's diet," he says.

With its thicker, larger crystals colored by its mineral content, unrefined salt is available in health food stores. The minerals in it make it a healthy choice for most of his high blood pressure patients, he says.

When salt is limited, the risk for heart disease, lipid disorders, and diabetes rises, he says. Patients who should avoid unrefined salt are those suffering from kidney failure because they can't process it.

Brownstein recommends that the average-size adult consume between one-half and one teaspoon of unrefined salt a day.

## Lefties More Fearful Than Righties

**F**ear affects left-handed people far more than it does righties, according researchers whose subjects watched the movie "Silence of the Lambs."

Lefties recalled scary parts of the Anthony Hopkins/Jodie Foster thriller in a much more fragmented way, Britain's Daily Telegraph reports. That effect is associated with people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

"The prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder is almost double in left-handers compared to right-handers," said lead researcher Dr. Carolyn Choudhary.

"We used a portion of film from 'Silence of the Lambs' that we know elicits fear, so we could check the recalled account against the

film. People who were left-handed showed significantly more fragmentation in their memories and more repetition.

"It seems that after experiencing a fearful event, even on film, people who are left handed had subtle behaviors that were like people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder."

The researchers believe the results could provide insight into the way the two sides of the brain deal with fear, as the right side of the brain is dominant in lefties while the left side prevails among righties.

"It is apparent the two sides of the brain have different roles in PTSD and the right-hand side of the brain seems to be involved in fear," said Choudhary.