

# Healthy and Low Sodium Buying Guide

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Created by Northwest Harvest in collaboration with the Healthy Food Environments group this document helps procurement leads and food bank managers and directors in their food procurement decisions. Brief descriptions and swap suggestions help identify the healthiest option. Use the “Shopping and Swap Suggestions” column to help identify which items to purchase. The additional notes column adds explanation and contains details for the asterisks. Use the supplementary “shopping guide” as an easy 1 pager for in store shopping. The shopping guide contains only the information in the first two columns. These suggestions and notes have been based around a 2000 calorie diet for a typical adult.

Fruit and Fruit Products		
Product	Shopping and Swap Suggestions	Additional Notes
Fruit, Canned Eg. sliced peaches, pears	<p><b>Choose:</b> “light syrup”</p> <p><b>Caution:</b> “with fruit juice”<sup>**</sup> and “no sugar added”<sup>***</sup></p> <p><b>Avoid:</b> If possible “heavy syrup”. Canned fruit with high fructose corn syrup.</p>	<p><i>Canned fruit: Aim for 6-10 grams or less per serving from <b>added</b> sugars.</i></p> <p><sup>**</sup>“with fruit juice” review the label of these items because grams of sugar per serving is often equivalent or greater than heavy syrup varieties. Varies by brand.</p> <p><sup>***</sup>“no sugar added” generally sweetened with artificial sweeteners. Avoid artificial sweeteners due to potential GI distress and new findings suggest links to chronic disease.</p>
Applesauce	<p><b>Choose:</b> “Unsweetened”</p> <p><b>Caution:</b> with added sugar</p> <p><b>Avoid:</b> High fructose corn syrup (Motts Regular Applesauce)</p>	<p>Unsweetened applesauce is a relatively common product and is similar in price and quantity to sweetened varieties.</p> <p>If the only options available contain sugar opts for &lt;10 grams of added sugar per serving.</p>

Vegetables and Processed Vegetable Products		
Product	Shopping and Swap Suggestions	Additional Notes
Green Beans, canned	<b>Choose:</b> no salt added varieties. <b>Caution:</b> If salt is added choose <140 mg of sodium or less per serving.	Always compare nutrition labels when possible. Similarly named canned green beans can have vastly different sodium levels.
Corn, canned	<b>Choose:</b> no salt added varieties. <b>Caution:</b> If salt is added choose <140 mg of sodium or less per serving.	Always compare nutrition labels when possible. Similarly named canned corn can have vastly different sodium levels.
Vegetables, cut or whole, frozen	<b>Generally okay as is</b>	Frozen vegetables without any additives (such as seasonings and sauces) are an excellent choice and do not require a swap.
Tomato paste, canned	<b>Choose:</b> no salt added varieties. <b>Caution:</b> If salt is added choose <140 mg of sodium or less per serving.	
Crushed tomatoes, diced tomatoes, canned	<b>Choose:</b> no salt added varieties. <b>Caution:</b> If salt is added choose <140 mg of sodium or less per serving.	
Stewed tomatoes, canned	<b>Choose:</b> No sodium, "Low Sodium"*, "Low in Sodium"*, "Less in Sodium"* OR 140 mg of sodium or less per serving. <b>Caution:</b> Stewed tomatoes with added sugar.	
Spaghetti Sauce	<b>Choose:</b> No sodium, "Low Sodium"*, "Low in Sodium"*, "Less in Sodium"* OR 140 mg of sodium or less per serving. <b>Caution:</b> Sauces with added sugar.	
Canned Soups and Ready to Eat Canned Meals		
Product	Shopping and Swap Suggestions	Additional Notes
Vegetable soup, canned	<b>Choose:</b> "Low Sodium"*, "Low in Sodium"*, "Less in Sodium"* OR "Healthy Request"* (Campbells specific) OR 140 mg of sodium or less per serving. <b>Caution:</b> Some low sodium vegetable soup products have increased sugar and fat. Compare labels when possible. <b>Avoid:</b> If possible, avoid products where per serving sodium is >40% DV**. Soups with high	*14-18X more costly than the regular version **>20% is considered high by the FDA. However, most canned regular vegetables soups exceed the 20% mark.

	<p>fructose corn syrup.</p> <p><b>Look for these brands:</b>  Amy's Organic Lentil Vegetable Soup, Light in Sodium,  Campbell's Chunky Healthy Request Savory Vegetables Soup,  Venice Maid Foods Condensed Vegetarian (Foodservice Brand)</p>	
<p>Cream and cheese based soups (eg. Cream of mushroom soup, canned)</p>	<p><b>Choose:</b> "Low Sodium"*, "Low in Sodium"*, "Less in Sodium"* OR 140 mg of sodium or less per serving. "Healthy request" (Campbells),  <b>Caution:</b> Some low sodium cream and cheese based soup products products have increased sugar and fat. Compare labels when possible.  <b>Avoid:</b> If possible, avoid products where per serving sodium is &gt;40% DV**. Soups with high fructose corn syrup. Soups with more than 5 grams of saturated fat per serving (about ½ cup)**.*</p>	<p>*14-18X more costly than the regular version  **&gt;20% is considered high by the FDA. However, most canned regular cream/cheese based soups exceed the 20% mark.  ***Dietary guidelines recommend no more than 13 grams of saturated fat per day.</p>
<p>Beef soups, canned, ready to eat( eg. Beef Stew/Chunky Beef with Vegetables, Chili)</p>	<p><b>Potential Swap:</b> Look for swap products such as <i>Campbell's Chunky Healthy Request Beef with Country Vegetables Soup</i>, canned, ready to eat. This product is similar in protein and carbs (aka equivalently filling) and low in sugar, and 50% less sodium than the typical beef stew.</p>	<p><b>Consider Trade-Offs</b>  Finding a low cost "healthy swap" is generally difficult for this product. Ready-to-eat beef soups and meat stews are a filling and easy to eat food, in particular for people who are facing homelessness and accessing the food bank for meals and do not have ready access to kitchens.</p>
<p>Meat based pastas canned, ready to eat (Beef Ravioli, canned, ready to eat)</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p><b>Consider Trade-Offs</b>  No obvious "healthy swap" that is considerably lower in sodium, sugar, and fat <i>and</i> provides the same amount of calories, proteins and carbs. Ready to eat meat based pastas are a filling and easy to eat food, in particular for people who are facing homelessness and accessing the food bank for meals.</p>
<p><b>Canned Beans, Fish, and Meat</b></p>		
<b>Product</b>	<b>Shopping and Swap Suggestions</b>	<b>Additional Notes</b>
<p>Beans, plain, canned</p>	<p><b>Choose:</b> If possible opt for no salt added.</p>	<p>Plain canned beans without any are an excellent choice and do not require a swap. Selecting "no salt" varieties is not of great importance</p>



		because rinsing canned beans removes 20-80% of added sodium.
Tuna, in water, broth, or oil, canned	<b>Choose:</b> consider “low sodium” and “no salt” varieties* and/or opt for tuna products that have <300 mg of sodium per serving.	*Canned tuna without salt can alter taste significantly. Consider taste when choosing low sodium varieties.
Chicken, canned,	<b>Choose:</b> consider “low sodium” and “no salt” varieties and/or opt for chicken products that have <350 mg of sodium per serving.	
Canned salmon	<b>Choose:</b> consider “low sodium” and “no salt” varieties* and/or opt for tuna products that have <300 mg of sodium per serving.	

**Dry Pasta Meals**

<b>Product</b>	<b>Shopping and Swap Suggestions</b>	<b>Additional Notes</b>
Cup of soup and instant noodle products	N/A	<p><b>Consider Trade-Offs</b> Finding a “healthy swap” is generally difficult for this product. Cup of soup and instant-noodle products are an easy to eat food, in particular for people who are facing homelessness and accessing the food bank for meals and do not have ready access to kitchens.</p> <p>Whenever possible, pair these products with some type of complex carbohydrates, vegetable, fruit, and/or protein product to help create complete and more filling meals.</p>
Mac and Cheese, dry, box	<b>Potential swap:</b> Annie’s Macaroni and Cheese* has fewer additives and preservatives. Relatively comparable in sodium, fat, and added sugars.	*Annie’s is 2X more costly than the national brand (Kraft Dinner) and 4X more costly than private label/store brands.
Mac and cheese, single serving pouches or cups	N/A	<p><b>Consider Trade-Offs</b> Finding a “healthy swap” is generally difficult for this product. Single serving mac and cheese pouches and cups are an easy to eat food, in particular for people who are facing homelessness and accessing the food bank for meals and do not have ready access to kitchens.</p>

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Rice-A-Roni	<b>Choose:</b> If possible opt for “lower sodium” varieties	

**Cereal and Grains**

<b>Product</b>	<b>Shopping and Swap Suggestions</b>	<b>Additional Notes</b>
Cereal	<b>Choose:</b> No sugar added varieties <b>Caution:</b> Added sugar, refined flour, and hydrogenated oils. <b>Avoid:</b> >10 grams of added sugar per serving	Often, there are specific varieties of cereals marketed to kids. They can be identified by the use of bright colorful packaging, large easy to read lettering, and the use of friendly mascots. These cereals often contain high levels of added sugar and refined flour.
Instant Oatmeal, dry, boxed or single serving sachets	<b>Choose:</b> No sugar added varieties <b>Caution:</b> Added sugar <b>Avoid:</b> >10 grams of added sugar per serving	
Pancake mix	<b>Generally okay as is</b>	

**Snacks**

<b>Product</b>	<b>Shopping and Swap Suggestions</b>	<b>Additional Notes</b>
Trail mix	<b>Choose:</b> <140 grams of sodium per serving <b>Caution:</b> added sugars* <b>Avoid:</b> >10 grams of sugar per serving and >20 grams of fat per serving	*In the ingredients look for: sugar, cane sugar, corn syrup, and high fructose corn syrup.
Crackers	<b>Choose:</b> low sodium <b>Caution:</b> added sugars* <b>Avoid:</b> >10 grams of sugar per serving and >20 grams of fat per serving	*In the ingredients look for: sugar, cane sugar, corn syrup, and high fructose corn syrup.
Fruit leather	<b>Generally okay</b>	

**Miscellaneous**

<b>Product</b>	<b>Shopping and Swap Suggestions</b>	<b>Additional Notes</b>
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Mixed blend Spices (eg. Seasoning/Fajita Mix/Taco Seasoning)	<b>Generally okay</b>	
Spices (eg. ground coriander)	<b>Generally okay</b>	
Shelf stable milk (cow)	<b>Generally okay</b>	
Shelf stable milk alternatives (soy milk, rice milk, almond milk)	<b>Generally okay</b>	
Peanut butter/almond butter and other nut butters	<b>Choose:</b> if possible choose peanut butter with limited ingredients and ideally only the roasted nut.* <b>Caution:</b> ingredients with hydrogenated oils and added sugars	*Nut butters with limited additives tend to be 0.5-4X more costly.
Juice boxes	<b>Choose:</b> juices with <10 grams of sugar per serving <b>Caution:</b> labels on juice boxes can be misleading, compare labels when possible. <b>Avoid:</b> >17 grams of sugar per serving. High fructose corn syrup.	Many juice boxes are advertised as being “100% juice”, “50% less sugar”, or “No Sugar Added”. Many of these labels can be misleading. Compare labels and choose options with <17 grams of sugar per 7 ounce serving.