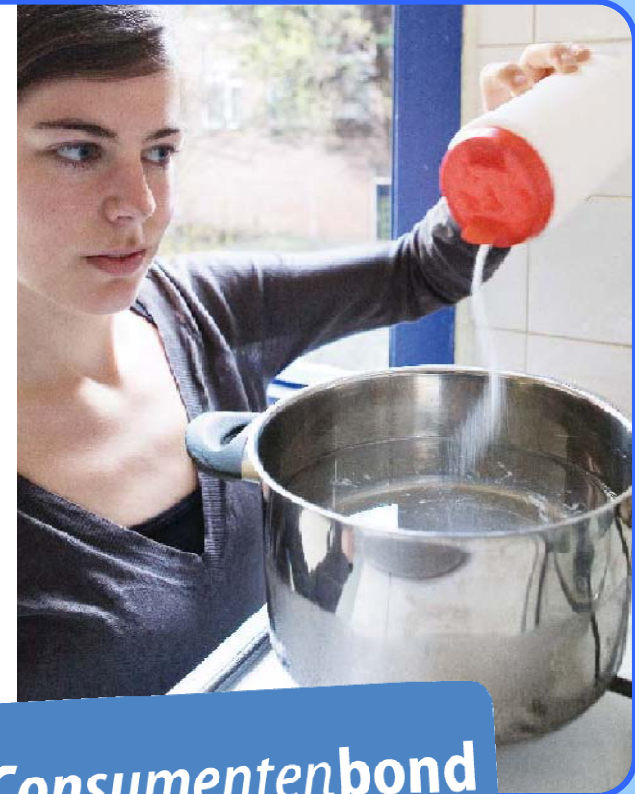


Consumer Awareness of salt intake
can consumers take action?

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Food policy advisor

Dutch Consumers Organisation



Consumentenbond

5
CONSUMERS
INTERNATIONAL
1960 - 2010

Dan weet je het.

Overview

- Introduction
- Why is salt an important consumer issue
- Work of the consumers organisations
- Consumer knowledge
- How to empower consumers
- Conclusions & recommendations



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Consumers International

- Global consumer voice
- Over 220 member organisations
- In 115 countries
- building a powerful international consumer movement
- protect and empower consumers everywhere
- Independent
- Since 1960
- 2010: 50th anniversary



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De Consumentenbond

- Dutch consumers' association with 550.000 members
- Since 1953
- Mission: to defend consumers' rights and help them make informed choices
 - Tests and comparative information
 - Advocacy, campaigning and lobbying
(active member of BEUC and Consumers International)
 - Advice
- Media: Consumentengids, Gezondgids, Reisgids, Geldgids, Digitaalguides, Consumentengids Online

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Nutrition and healthy eating

■ Food risk: food safety -> nutrition

- Our food has become safer
- Unhealthy diet greater risk
- Obesity and diet related diseases: diabetes, heart disease, cancer
- We eat too much, and our diet has the wrong composition
- The biggest chances to counteract this trend, are in the hands of industry
 - Limit the supply of unhealthy products
 - Reduce portion sizes
 - Reduce the amount of advertising of unhealthy foods to children
 - Improve product composition (fatty acids, salt, sugar)
- Government should provide for conditions for change, and if necessary force change

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Salt: consumers have a problem

- **Nutrition advice (NL):**

- Eat more fruit & vegetables and more (fatty) fish,
- More exercise, less alcohol
- Consume less than 6 g salt (NaCl) per day



- **Advice is maximum of 6 g (WHO: 5g) salt per day**

- Information on the label is incomplete (no salt, sometimes sodium)
- Salt consumption mostly due to hidden salt in processed foods
- Taste of a product not a measure for salt content

- **Advice of 6 g (or 5g) a day is not feasible**

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Calculation (NL)

	Mortality rate 2004 (NHS)	3 g less salt a day (12 → 9 g pp)	6 g less salt a day (12 → 6 g pp)
Strokes	11.089	- 13% (- 1.442)	- 24% (- 2.661)
Heart infarcts	14.083	- 10% (- 1.408)	- 18% (- 2.535)
TOTAL	25.172	- 11% (- 2.850)	- 21% (- 5.196)

- **Appr. 2500 deaths due to excessive salt intake yearly**

- Deaths in traffic 2006: 811 (Ministry of Transport & Public Works)

- Murders in 2006: 148 (Elsevier)

(Dutch population is 16,5 mln)

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Consumer organisations

Tests and information

- Hong Kong Consumer Council
- Consumers Korea
- Foundation for Consumers (Thailand)
- Consumers Foundation Chinese Taipei
- Consumers Association India
- Pro Teste (Brazil)
- LIDECON (Guatemala)
- Consumers Union (USA)
- Organisation Tunisienne de Défense du Consommateur
- Altroconsumo (Italy)
- Consumers International Santiago <-> Pan American Health Organisation
- Consumentenbond (the Netherlands)



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Consumer knowledge (2008, NL)

- 55% of Dutch population know salt has a negative effect on health
- 30% think salt is positive for health!
- 49% think 3g per day is recommended
- 28% know they should eat less than 6g
- 40% think they consume less than the recommended maximum
- 58% know processed foods are the main source
- 49% know salt contains sodium



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Consumer opinion (2008, NL)

- **65%: there should be more information and education about salt**
- **Do you check the label often for salt content?**
 - Hardly ever: 55%
 - Sometimes: 26%
 - Regularly: 19%
- **Should salt/sodium be compulsory on the label?**
 - Yes: 73%
 - No: 5%
 - No opinion: 22%
- **Sodium or salt?**
 - Sodium: 9%
 - Salt: 57%
 - No opinion: 32%



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How much salt is in it?

- Salt content hardly ever labelled
- Sodium was declared on 36% of the products
- If it is declared: hard to understand and use

Voedingswaarde per 100 g	
energie	440 kJ (105 kcal)
eiwit	6.5 g
koolhydraten	14 g
waarvan suikers	4.5 g
vet	2.5 g
waarvan verzadigd	0.5 g
onverzadigd	1.5 g
transvet	0 g
voedingsvezel	1.0 g
natrium	0.40 g
Deze maaltijd bevat 470 kcal.	
Gemiddelde energiebehoefte per dag:	
mannen	2500 kcal
vrouwen	2000 kcal

Gemiddelde voedingswaarde / Average nutritional value	per 100 g
Energie/ Energy	2677 kJ / 647 kcal
Eiwit / Protein	17 g
Koolhydraten / Carbohydrates	17 g
Vet / Fat	54 g

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Complicated calculation

Example: ready meal Chicken Tandoori

- Weight of the meal 450 g
- Sodium per 100 g product = 0,32 g
- Salt (sodiumchloride) = 2,5 x sodium
- Salt per 100 g = $0,32 \times 2,5 = 0,8$ g
- Salt in the meal = $450/100 \times 0,8 = 3,6$ g



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Is there something to choose?

Product	Brand name	Portion		Salt
Italian Pizza met salami	Al Capone (bezorg)	482 gr	1 pizza	9,16 g
Pizza Medium Pepperoni (tomaat, salami, kaas)	New York pizza (bez.)	402 gr	1 pizza	6,23 g
Steenovenpizza Salami	Di Angelo (Aldi)	350 gr	1 pizza	6,21 g
Nasi Goreng (Chinese)	AH	500 gr	1 portie	6,00 g
Pizza Salami	Super	350 gr	1 pizza	5,95 g
Big Pizza Supreme Am. Style topped with salami	Wagner	410 gr	1 pizza	5,64 g
Pizza Salami	Pizzaria	338 gr	1 pizza	5,58 g
Pizza 'met Salami'	Domino's (bezorg)	429 gr	1 pizza	5,47 g
Pizza American Texas	C1000	435 gr	1 pizza	5,33 g
Pizza Salami (3 pizza's in 1 pak) v. Trattoria Alfredo	Trattoria Alfredo	350 gr	1 pizza	5,16 g
Bami Goreng (1 kg)	Quick & Easy (Aldi)	333 gr	1 portie	5,08 g
Steenovenpizza salami	AH	350 gr	1 pizza	5,08 g
Nasi Goreng met ham en groenten	C1000	450 gr	1 portie	4,73 g
Stoommaaltijd zalmfilet	AH	450 gr	1 maaltijd	1,46 g
Stoommaaltijd zalmfilet vier-kazensaus	AH	450 gr	1 maaltijd	0,98 g

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Is there something to choose?

Product	Lowest	Highest	Difference
	(salt/portion)	(salt/portion)	(%)
Brown bread	0,37	0,51	-27
White bread	0,29	0,60	-52
Wholemeal bread	0,45	0,58	-22
Gouda cheese 48+	0,32	0,68	-53
Sandwich spread	0,21	0,30	-30
Ham	0,22	0,31	-29
Pizza	2,93	9,16	-68
Nasi/bami	1,72	6,00	-71
Peas (canned)	0,39	1,05	-63
Stir fry sauce	0,33	2,01	-84
Knakworst(NL sausage)	0,26	0,60	-57
Tomato soup (canned)	1,40	2,80	-50
Kroketten (dutch snack)	0,60	1,08	-44
Borrelnootjes (snack)	0,36	0,55	-35
Meat replacers	0,64	1,65	-61
Speculaas (biscuit)	0,06	0,16	-63

- 344 product tested
- Average: 1,1 g salt
- 52x over 2 g / portion
- 17x over 4 g
- 4x over 6 g
- Mean difference within each category: 52%

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A few good reasons for improved labelling

- **What (Dutch) consumers want to know:**
 - Expiry date
 - Price
 - Brand
 - Weight
 - Composition/ ingredients
 - Nutritional value (fat, carbohydrates, sodium, protein, etc.)
 - Origin

- **Consumers find nutritional information important, but don't always understand it**

Source: Ministerie van VWS, conducted by Schuttelaar & Partners, 2005

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Towards simplified nutrition labelling

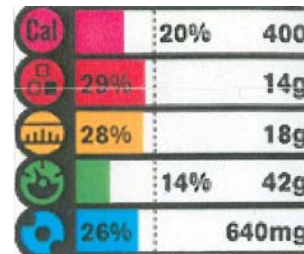
- Health marks



- Colour coding



- %GDAs



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Colour coding

- Consumer research
- Simple information at-a-glance
- Comparison possible within and across food categories
- Consistent across all food categories
- Is perceived as credible
- Not patronizing



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%GDAs (% reference intake)

- Does not reflect the need to lower the intake of certain nutrients
- Consumers possibly see the %ri as an aim
- Harder to understand than multiple colour coding
- Too complicated when in a hurry (shopping)
- RIs differ per individual: this might be misleading
- No stimulus for reformulation
- Misleading indication of portion size



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Conclusions



- Excessive salt intake is a global problem
- Consumer organisations across the world have highlighted the issue
- Consumer awareness on salt/ sodium not yet good enough
- Hard for consumers to lower their intake:
 - salt is mostly hidden in processed foodstuffs
 - labelling not yet compulsory
 - label hard to understand
- Consumers should be able to take action if:
 - they would be aware of the health benefits of cutting salt intake
 - they would be aware of the differences between similar products from competitors
 - all labels would be complete and easy to understand (e.g. traffic light labelling)



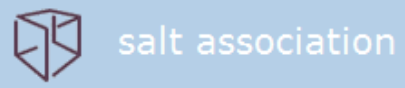
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Recommendations



- Consumers cannot do it on their own
- Consumer organisations can put the issue on the agenda and have done so
- Education and labelling are essential but need to be improved, even in the more developed countries
- Industry:
 - reformulation
 - labelling
- Public health problem: governments need to play an active role
 - education & information
 - labelling
 - push industry to reduce salt (product reformulation)

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introducing salt sense

■ saltsense.co.uk

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At saltsense.co.uk we look at all the issues affecting the use of salt in our diets, as a useful preservative and even to make our roads safer during icy weather.

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