



Southport and  
Ormskirk Hospital  
NHS Trust

## **PATIENT INFORMATION**

# **Adding Flavour Without Adding Salt**

## **Why reduce salt?**

You may have been advised by your doctor or health care professional to reduce the amount of salt in your diet.

A diet high in salt has been shown to increase high blood pressure (hypertension) which can lead to heart disease and stroke.

Recommended salt intake for adults: Should eat no more than 6g (2.5g sodium) per day.

Reducing the amount of salt in your diet does not result in bland, tasteless foods. There are different methods of flavoring foods which can enhance the taste of meals.

The introduction of flavoring's:

- Herbs and spices
- Vinegar and sauces
- Fruit juices/ zests
- Cheese
- Aromatic vegetables

### **Top tips:**

- Using fresh or dried herbs will give more flavour and enhance the natural flavours in foods.
- Marinating meat, fish and poultry can improve their taste as well as their texture.
- Grilling and roasting can also enhance food's natural flavour but remember not to add too much fat and drain off any excess oil/ cooking juices.

- Vinegars and homemade salad dressings, herbs and spices can be added to salads.
- Use small amounts of sauces, gravy and cheese. Try stronger smelling cheeses e.g. stilton, camembert so that you use smaller amounts however get more flavour.

There are no set rules for using herbs and spices so just experiment and find what works for you!

## **How to add flavour without adding salt**

Here are some ideas for herbs and spices and their use.

### **Herbs**

**Basil:** Mild and fragrant. May be used with poultry, stews, and root vegetables, also great in salads and rice dishes. Fresh basil may be sprinkled towards the end of the cooking time or used as a garnish. Use fresh rather than dried.

**Bay leaves:** An essential part of the bouquet garni and a useful flavouring for stews, sauces and gravy, meat and poultry, casseroles, fish and rice dishes. The flavour is strong so only use half a bay leaf to start with.

**Chilli:** Chilli peppers or chilli powder can be used to spice up any dish.

**Chives:** A much milder version of onion, with little aftertaste. Very tasty chopped up in cottage cheese, omelettes or scrambled eggs. Used in potato and other salads.

**Dill:** The leaves can be used raw or at the end of cooking pork, fish and new potatoes. The seeds are strongly flavoured and taste a bit like caraway seeds. Use them to flavour root and green vegetables, salads, vinegar and pickles.

**Fennel:** The seeds have a warming aniseed flavour but the fresh leaves are sweeter and richer. Snip the leaves in fish recipes or over cucumber, salad and soup.

**Marjoram (Oregano):** Goes well with practically all foods but especially with poultry, pork and lamb, fish and egg

dishes and stews. Can be added to green vegetables while they are cooking.

**Mint:** Apart from mint sauce with lamb, mint may be used as a flavouring for potatoes, green vegetables and salad. It is very tasty if used in stuffing for poultry.

**Parsley:** Probably the best known and most widely used herb because it enhances most flavours. Both stem and leaves can be used in stews and soups, with meat and fish, vegetables and salads, sauces and stuffings.

**Rosemary:** This has a strong, pungent flavour and should be added to foods in small amounts. Use when roasting lamb, mutton or poultry. Can also be used in stews, stuffings and with white cabbage.

**Sage:** A strong and aromatic herb, which is used mainly in pork and poultry dishes and in stuffings for duck and goose.

**Tarragon:** This has a bittersweet flavour. Use only in small amounts with poultry, fish, eggs and salads.

**Thyme:** A strong flavour recommended for mutton, pork and beef dishes. Small amounts are good in cottage cheese, omelettes, salads and  
Spices

**Anise (Aniseed):** The seeds have the strongest flavour, which are sweet and warming. It goes well with fresh fruit also use with fish, poultry and in sauces.

**Allspice:** Whole it is used to add flavour to boiled meats, pot roast, soups and bean dishes. Ground, it can be added to ham dishes, curries, meat loaves and sweet potatoes.

**Cardamom:** Used as seeds or ground in curries and rice dishes or stewed with fruit and puddings.

**Cayenne Pepper:** Made from chilli and can be used with fish, curries, stews, potatoes and vegetables, and sprinkled in cheese dishes.

**Cinnamon:** It can either be rolled into cinnamon sticks or powdered. It has a sweet and distinctive flavour. Add to hot drinks, stewed fruit, biscuits, puddings and curries.

**Cloves:** Have a strong flavour so should be used sparingly. They are traditionally used with stewed apples and pears, but go well with baked or boiled onions, curries and boiled meats. Remember to remove before eating.

**Coriander:** The seeds can be used to flavour both sweet and savoury foods. They have a sweet, pleasant but slightly bitter taste like orange zest. Fresh leaves can be used in stews, pickles, curries and rice dishes.

**Cumin:** A typical ingredient of Indian curries, also goes well with lamb, chicken and yogurt.

**Ginger:** Use fresh or ground with fruit, in biscuits and stews. Sprinkle on pork or lamb chops before grilling. Fresh ginger can be cut into small pieces and frozen in bags, to keep for longer.

**Mace:** Available in blade or ground form. It has a subtle flavour, milder than nutmeg. Good with fish, cheese and green vegetables.

**Mustard:** Goes nicely with beef. Rub surface with dry mustard before cooking. Mustard enhances the flavour of cheese, so less cheese can be used in a dish.

**Nutmeg:** Grate over vegetables, particularly beans, cabbage and cauliflower.

**Paprika:** A mild and bright red pepper. It adds piquancy and colour to meat, fish and vegetable dishes. Use as a garnish for pale coloured dishes.

**Pepper:** Black pepper is more pungent than white pepper. Always grind peppercorns just before use otherwise they quickly lose their strength when broken. Grind over most vegetables and stews and on meat before cooking.

**Turmeric:** Use powdered in curries or when boiling rice to give it an interesting yellow colour.

### **Vinegars and sauces**

#### **Vinegars:**

Garlic or herbs e.g. mixed herbs, rosemary, tarragon or thyme can be placed into a bottle with wine vinegar. This can be used as a dressing for salads, savory dishes or hot vegetables.

#### **Salad Dressing:**

Instead of an oil based salad dressing make a yogurt based dressing and add ingredients such as lemon juice, oil, garlic or mustard.

#### **Marinades:**

Soak meat or poultry in a mixture of wine, vinegar and flavoring's, using herbs and spices.

## **Gravy**

Thin gravy can be made by boiling the meat juices, water and gravy browning. Skim the fat off first. Thicken the gravy by adding corn flour. Be aware that gravy granules and stock cubes tend to be high in salt.

## **Sauces:**

Serve with meat, fish or poultry to improve the flavour and add variety to your food. Try the following:

- Dill, parsley or cucumber sauce with fish
- Mint sauce or jelly with lamb
- Apple sauce with pork
- Cranberry sauce with turkey
- Mustard or horseradish sauce with beef
- White sauce with chicken

## **Fruit juices/ zests**

The acidity of citrus fruits enhances the flavour of foods. Citrus fruits contain lemons, limes and oranges. Juices of the fruit can be squeezed into meals while cooking or at the end of meals. Sectors of the fruit can be served with meals as a garnish. Can be drizzled on top of stir-fry's, curries, fresh vegetables.

The zest of citrus fruits can be used to add additional flavour. Especially to baking e.g. pastry.

## **Cheese:**

Cheese is naturally quite salty therefore it's a really good substitute food to have when replacing salt. Hard cheeses such as parmesan tend to be saltier. It's important to remember to add small amounts, as cheese has a high fat



content if large amounts used. Also try to use stronger smelling cheeses, as they add more flavour and only small amounts required.

### **Aromatic vegetables**

**Garlic:** Use the clove only and not garlic salt. The clove is best crushed to flavour salads and meat but can be used in most dishes. A small quantity of garlic will heighten existing flavours.

**Leeks:** Leeks have a sweet, oniony flavour. They add depth to soups, stews and pasta dishes.

**Onion:** They give umami and sweetness flavour to dishes. They add a crunchy texture to dishes. Onions can increase the fragrance of foods especially when they are caramelized.

**During your contact with us, it is important that you are happy with your care and treatment. Please speak to a member of staff and/or the ward/department Sister/Charge Nurse if you have any questions or concerns.**

## **MATRON**

A Matron is also available during the hours of 9.00 to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday. During these periods, ward/department staff can contact Matron to arrange to meet with you. Out of hours, a Senior Nurse can be contacted via the ward/department to deal with any concerns you may have.

## **INFECTION CONTROL REQUEST**

Preventing infections is a crucial part of our patients' care. To ensure that our standards remain high our staff have regular infection prevention and control training and their practice is monitored in the workplace. We ask patients and visitors to assist us in preventing infections by cleaning their hands at regular intervals and informing staff of areas within the hospital that appear soiled.

As a patient there may be times that you are unsure whether a staff member has cleaned their hands; if in doubt please ask the staff member and they will be only too happy to put your mind at ease by cleaning their hands so that you can see them.

## **SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS**

### **ANY CONDITION SPECIFIC DANGER SIGNALS TO LOOK OUT FOR:**

### **CONTACT INFORMATION IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CONDITION**

Your own GP –  
Dietitian –

### **OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS/CONTACTS:**

NHS 111

Stop Smoking Helpline (Sefton) - 0300 100 1000

Stop Smoking Helpline (West Lancashire) - 0800 328 6297

**Please call 01704 704714 if you need  
this leaflet in an alternative format**

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Tel: (01695) 577111

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**FOR APPOINTMENTS**

Telephone (01695) 656680  
Email [soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net](mailto:soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net)

Please remember to complete the **attached** *Friends and Family Test*.

Alternatively, you can complete the *Friends and Family Test* on-line by going to:

southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/FFT

**Thank you**

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