

New cooking training significantly decreases sodium levels in Chinese take-out meals

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While Chinese dishes are known to have one of the highest salt contents of all food categories, new research finds that a cooking training for Chinese take-out chefs and restaurant owners can result in substantial

reductions in sodium in the foods they serve with no substantial loss of taste. This study was published today in *Public Health Reports*.

A research team from Temple University's Center for Asian Health investigated the effectiveness of a sodium-reduction [training](#) intervention, "Healthy Chinese Take-Out Initiative," which trained chefs from 206 Chinese take-out restaurants in the low-income neighborhoods in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Initiative included:

- professionally led, culturally tailored training on healthy, low-sodium cooking
- low-sodium cooking materials such as recipes and measurement spoons
- a citywide mass-media campaign on sodium reduction
- annual one-on-one booster trainings and compliance checks

The researchers monitored the sodium in three popular dishes—shrimp and broccoli, chicken lo mein, and General Tso's chicken—in 40 restaurants and found significant reductions in the [sodium content](#) of all three dishes 36 months after the initial training intervention.

"These findings demonstrate the feasibility and potential benefits to population health of a coordinated partnership among public health agencies, academic institutions, and community businesses and organizations to reduce [sodium](#) in restaurants," wrote the study authors.

The authors added that more research should be done on the subject examining the effects of the intervention in other types of restaurants, such as delis, buffets, or pizza shops.

More information: "Evaluation of a Healthy Chinese Take-Out Sodium-Reduction Initiative in Philadelphia Low-Income Communities and Neighborhoods" by Ma et al., *Public Health Reports*, 2018.

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