

# Salt shakers should carry tobacco-style health warning, say experts

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Salt sold in supermarkets and salt shakers in restaurants should be required to carry a front-of-pack, tobacco-style health warning, according to The World Hypertension League and leading international

health organizations.

In a [position statement](#) published in the *Journal of Clinical Hypertension*, lead author Dr. Norm Campbell, former President of the World Hypertension League, said it was time for a more hard-hitting approach to dietary [salt](#) reduction.

"Unhealthy diets are a leading cause of death globally and excess salt consumption is the biggest culprit, estimated to cause over 3 million deaths globally in 2017."

"The World Health Organization established a target for countries to reduce sodium intake by 30% by 2025, and governments and the [food industry](#) have been working together to reduce salt in processed foods. However, [urgent action](#) now needs to be taken to raise consumer awareness of these dangers," added Dr. Campbell.

"Although many countries have started to look at a variety of public [health](#) measures to encourage people to eat less salt, we're not aware of any that have required actual containers of salt to have [warning](#) labels," he said.

Jacqui Webster, Director of the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre on Population Salt Reduction at the George Institute for Global Health, commented "Eating too much salt increases people's blood pressure which is one of the biggest contributors to premature death from stroke or heart disease."

"Although most countries require sodium levels on labels in processed foods, they are difficult for people to interpret and don't warn of any health risks."

"Health warnings on salt package and dispensers would be a simple, cost-

effective way of conveying the dangers of salt to billions of people worldwide," she added.

"Most people aren't aware that the amount of salt they are consuming is raising their blood pressure and shortening their lives," said Dr. Tom Frieden, President and CEO of Resolve to Save Lives, an initiative of Vital Strategies. "Warning labels on packaged foods and menus can help people make healthier choices. Adding warning labels to all salt packaging is another way to make the healthy choice the easy choice."

The authors proposed the following wording for the warning: "Excess sodium can cause high blood pressure and promote stomach cancer. Limit your use."

**More information:** Norm R. C. Campbell et al. Packages of sodium (Salt) sold for consumption and salt dispensers should be required to have a front of package health warning label: A position statement of the World Hypertension League, national and international health and scientific organizations, *The Journal of Clinical Hypertension* (2019). [DOI: 10.1111/jch.13698](https://doi.org/10.1111/jch.13698)

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