



THE CHAMPLAIN  
CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE  
PREVENTION NETWORK

RÉSEAU DE PRÉVENTION DES  
MALADIES CARDIOVASCULAIRES  
DE LA RÉGION DE CHAMPLAIN

## Champlain residents unable to identify common, high-sodium foods, new study finds

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For immediate release

**OTTAWA** – A study by the Champlain Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Network (CCPN) of 1,565 Champlain residents found that close to half of respondents were not able to correctly identify many high sodium foods commonly found in the Canadian diet. The study, published in this week's edition of the *Canadian Journal of Cardiology*, shows a troubling disconnect between what residents say they know and their reported knowledge of where sodium is hiding in food.

The majority of respondents are aware that too much sodium in their diet might be dangerous and 70% indicated they were trying to cut back on the amount of sodium they ate. While 90% of respondents knew that processed foods were the largest source of sodium in the Canadian diet, a surprising 50 % were not able to correctly identify many high sodium foods commonly found in the Canadian diet like processed cheese, bottle salad dressings, canned tomato sauce, and frozen foods.

"It's great that the majority of our residents are aware that too much sodium is an issue, but they may be confusing high sodium foods they think are healthy and jeopardizing their health," says Sophia Papadakis, Program Leader for the CCPN and lead author of the study. "This data tells us that we have a lot of work to do to help our residents make healthier, lower sodium choices for their heart health," says Papadakis.

The study is the first of its kind to try and better understand what the Champlain population aged 35 to 50 knows about dietary sodium and what they are doing to reduce the amount of sodium they eat.

Among Canadians, over 80% of men and 60% of women have sodium intakes exceeding the recommended upper limit of 2300 mg a day. About one in seven deaths from strokes and one in 11 deaths from coronary heart disease could be prevented if Canadians reduced their dietary sodium intake by about half.

"We should be eating no more than 1500 mg of sodium a day," says Dr. Andrew Pipe, Chief of the Division of Prevention and Rehabilitation at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute. "Most Canadians will eat three or four times that amount putting themselves at risk for high blood pressure which is a key risk factor for heart disease and stroke."

"Reducing the amount of sodium we eat is one of the most important steps we can take to improve our heart health," says Papadakis. We can do that by reading food labels, comparing products and make small changes like staying away from processed foods."

In August 2009, health partners in the Champlain region launched the "Give Your Head a Shake" bilingual mass media campaign to help residents decrease their sodium consumption. The campaign provides consumers with quick and easy tips to reduce the shockingly high amount of sodium they consume every day.

Instead of consuming the following high sodium foods, residents are encouraged to consider lower-sodium alternatives:

<b>Commonly consumed high sodium foods</b>	<b>Amt of sodium</b>	<b>Healthy alternatives</b>	<b>Amt. of sodium</b>
Processed cheese ( 1 thin slice, 21 g)	310 mg	Slices of cheddar cheese (21 g, less than 1 oz)	131 mg
Bottled salad dressing (2 Tbsp, 30 mL)	133 mg	Home made lemon vinaigrette (2 Tbsp, 30 mL)	0 mg
Canned tomato sauce (1/2 cup, 125 mL)	470 mg	Low sodium canned tomato sauce (1/2 cup, 125 mL)	40 mg
Frozen seasoned chicken breast (1 piece, 120 g)	630 mg	Fresh chicken breasts – grilled about 3 oz, 85 g)	80 mg

The study released this week, was conducted by Leger Marketing in July 2010 among 1,565 residents between the ages of 35 and 50, living in the Champlain region, just prior to launching the two-year campaign. Further surveys are planned to continue to evaluate the impact of the campaign on changes with respect to sodium knowledge and actions taken over time.

The campaign is part of a region-wide effort to reduce heart disease and stroke in Eastern Ontario by 2020. It is a joint endeavor by key health partners including Ottawa Public Health, the Eastern Ontario Health Unit, the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario, the Champlain Local Health Integration Network and the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

### **The Champlain Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Network (CCPN)**

As an alliance of 15 health and community partners from across the Champlain Region of Ontario, the CCPN is leading the implementation of a five-year cardiovascular disease (CVD) prevention strategy with a goal to prevent 10,000 premature deaths from heart disease and stroke in the region by 2020. The Champlain Region includes the City of Ottawa, the Eastern Counties of Prescott and Russell and Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, Renfrew County, and parts of Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Counties.

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