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## Mr. Noodles wins 2011 Canadian Salt Lick Award

*Cheap, salty products a feature of student diet*

OTTAWA, November 24 \_ Mr. Noodles, a low-cost diet staple popular among university and college students, has won the fourth annual Canadian Salt Lick Award.

“A package of the popular ramen-style noodles provides the sodium equivalent of drinking a cup of sea water,” says Kevin Willis of the Canadian Stroke Network.

Mr. Noodles “Oriental Flavour” contains 2,640 milligrams of sodium per package -- 1,140 mg more than the recommended adequate daily intake of 1,500 mg for adults.

Canadians consume 210 million packs of instant noodles a year – the equivalent of six packs per person per year, according to the World Instant Noodle Association website. ([instantnoodles.org](http://instantnoodles.org)) However, nutrition researchers have plenty of evidence that university and college students eat more than their share.

A study of 108 university-age males, published in 2009 by researchers at the University of Guelph, and a 2008 study of 128 university-age females found that students gravitate towards inexpensive highly processed foods that are filling and easy to prepare, says nutrition professor Alison Duncan. Daily sodium intake among the university-age males was 4,300 mg, while females studied consumed on average 3,300 mg of sodium a day.

Research shows that university students rely heavily on instant noodle products because they have limited facilities to prepare food, they have limited resources, they don’t have food preparation skills and they lack awareness.

In July 2010, Health Canada released the long-awaited report of its Sodium Working Group, comprised of industry representatives and health organizations. The report called for the food industry to voluntarily reduce the level of sodium in prepared and packaged foods.

“Health-promoting sodium-reduction targets need to be urgently established and enforced for all foods,” Dr. Willis says.

High sodium in the food supply drives up blood pressure, leading to stroke, heart and kidney disease, among other conditions. It is estimated that more than 60 cardiovascular disease hospitalizations and deaths per day in Canada can be attributed to over-consumption of salty foods, according to a 2008 publication in the *Canadian Journal of Cardiology*.

Dr. Graham MacGregor, who leads the U.K.-based World Action on Salt and Health, says widespread dietary sodium reduction would result in the “biggest improvement in public health since clean water and drains.”

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