Is your sodium out of hand?

The typical adult consumes about 3,400 milligrams of sodium each day while the recommendation is 2,300 milligrams of sodium. In fact, people with hypertension, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease and individuals over the age of 51 years should not be consuming more than 1,500 milligrams of sodium each day according to the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

“One way to reduce sodium intake is to compare similar food products’ Nutrition Facts labels for sodium and consistently select products with lower sodium values when grocery shopping,” says Dr. Sharon Robinson, Nutrition Specialist and Registered Dietitian with the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. A third of sodium intake is from yeast breads, chicken dishes, pizza, pasta dishes, cold cuts and condiments. It is especially important to check the labels of these food products for sodium when grocery shopping.

“Eat more meals at home where you can reduce sodium during food preparation and at the table. Cook with spices and herbs instead of salt when preparing foods and when possible select fresh foods over processed foods,” says Robinson.

Another way to reduce sodium intake is to follow the DASH eating plan. DASH stands for Dietary Interventions to Stop Hypertension. The DASH eating plan is rich in vegetables and fruit. For example, the DASH eating plan recommends 4 to 5 servings of vegetables and 4 to 5 servings of fruit daily for a 2,000 calorie eating plan. Before changing your eating plan talk with a physician or registered dietitian especially if you have hypertension or other chronic disease.

To learn more about nutrition label reading or how to cook with less salt contact your local Family and Consumer Sciences County Extension Agent.

Resources:
http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/dietaryguidelines.htm