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Sodium (Na) intakes in Irish adults

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Na intakes from food sources (i.e. excluding Na in salt added in cooking or at the table) were estimated using data from the National Adult Nutrition Survey (NANS). The NANS was carried out between October 2008 and April 2010 to establish a database of habitual food and drink consumption in a representative sample of Irish adults (*n* 1500) aged 18 years and over. A 4-d semi-weighed food record was used to collect food intake data. Dietary intake data were analysed using WISP© (Tinuviel Software, Anglesey, UK), which is based on the sixth edition of McCance and Widdowson’s *The Composition of Foods*⁽¹⁾ and the Irish food composition database⁽²⁾. Under-reporters were excluded from the analysis.

	18–64 years			≥ 65 years		
	All (<i>n</i> 889)	Males (<i>n</i> 448)	Females (<i>n</i> 441)	All (<i>n</i> 162)	Males (<i>n</i> 75)	Females (<i>n</i> 87)
Salt intake	g	g	g	g	g	g
Mean	7.4	8.5*	6.2	6.3	7.3*	5.4
SD	2.4	2.3	1.8	2.3	2.6	1.5
Median	7.1	8.4	6.0	5.9	7.3	5.4
Percentiles						
5th	3.9	4.9	3.4	3.1	3.3	3.0
95th	11.6	12.6	9.3	10.6	12.0	7.7

*Significantly ($P < 0.001$) higher than females in same age group.

Food group	All 18–64 years (<i>n</i> 889)		All ≥ 65 years (<i>n</i> 162)	
	Na (mg/d)	%	Na (mg/d)	%
Meat and fish	911	30.1	769	30.2
Cured/processed meats	568	18.1	486	18.2
Meat/meat dishes	248	8.6	163	7.0
Fish/fish dishes	95	3.3	119	4.9
Bread and rolls	630	21.9	617	24.8
Soups, sauces and miscellaneous foods	254	8.5	223	8.7
Milk and milk products	239	8.3	209	8.7
Vegetable/processed vegetables including potatoes	205	7.0	135	5.8
Biscuits/cakes/pastries/confectionery	180	6.3	117	4.9
Breakfast cereals	171	5.7	155	6.0
RTEBC	137	4.7	81	3.4
Other	34	1.0	75	2.6
Spreading fats	94	3.2	137	5.3

Mean daily salt (g) intakes in adults aged 18–64 and ≥ 65 years exceeded the FSAI salt intake target (6 g/d)⁽³⁾. These estimates do not allow for all additions in cooking or any additions at the table, generally assumed to be about 15–20% of total dietary Na intake. Meat and fish (especially cured/processed meats) and bread and rolls were the main contributors to Na intake.

Even when discretionary salt intake is excluded, mean salt intake of Irish adults exceed current FSAI salt targets.

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1. Food Standards Agency (2002) *McCance and Widdowson’s The Composition of Foods*, 6th ed. Cambridge: Royal Society of Chemistry.
2. Black LJ, Ireland J, Møller A *et al.* (2011) Development of an on-line Irish food composition database for nutrients. *J Food Compos Anal* (In the Press) doi:10.1016/j.jfca.2011.01.015
3. Food Safety Authority of Ireland (2005) *Salt and Health: Review of the Scientific Evidence and Recommendations for Public Policy in Ireland*. Dublin: Food Safety Authority of Ireland.