

SALT

In ancient cultures and in all the great systems of traditional medicine, salt has played an important role. It has been championed as one of the vital elements necessary for human and animal life, without which we cannot properly function. Salt in its natural crystal form actually consists of all the elements present in our bodies and on which our bodies are built.⁴

The benefits and importance of salt in the diet are well documented by learned scholars such as Hippocrates,² Galen and Avicenna³ and traditional systems of medicine all support the use and stress the importance of salt in the diet. The current trend seems to be to declare salt bad for human health and advise the public to reduce intake or cut out of the diet completely. As a result we now have populations suffering from ill health on an epidemic scale, due to mineral deficiency derived from a lack of good salt intake. The public worldwide have altered their diets in accordance with these new 'medical findings' and scare tactics by the media that have enticed the public into believing salt is the root of many illnesses. Although western nutritionists suggests that the body only requires 0.198 grams of salt a day, most people, although heavily overburdened with sodium chloride are still deficient in salt.⁴

The answer is not to cut down on good and healthy salt, but to cut down on table salt and more importantly processed foods heavily laden with this unnatural form of sodium chloride. The public have been misled into believing that all salt is bad for them, when in fact they need it more than ever in a time where so much food processing has removed natural minerals from our foodstuffs. The message that should more correctly be given to the general public is perhaps to cut down or remove processed food from their diet and to supplement an unnatural refined diet with natural unrefined salt.

Unfortunately, what practitioners in more traditional fields and some enlightened researchers and scientists have known and feared for many years, is now coming to light. What is surfacing is the result of decades of malnutrition, deprivation of good salt and subsequent mineral deficiency in whole populations. New research is now pointing to the need of salt in the diet and indicating that low-sodium diets are detrimental to health - re-proving ancient wisdom!

So why do we need unrefined salt in our diet?

We need salt for proper cell functioning, for maintaining the electrolyte balance inside and outside the cells, for digestion, for a properly functioning nervous system and for healthy skin, teeth and bones, amongst other things. Unrefined salt contains all the minerals vital for our health and wellbeing. We cannot obtain sufficient salt from unprocessed foodstuffs alone and therefore need to take this in the form of salt as an additional supplement to our diet. In hot weather, people sweat a lot and salt is excreted in perspiration and more salt is subsequently required in the diet.

Good salt and bad salt

A distinction needs to be made between different types of salt.

Refined table salt, which has only been in use in the last 50-100 years, contains 99.9% sodium chloride. The remaining 0.1% is made up of additives. These include for example potassium iodide, sugar and aluminium silicate. Ironically, potassium iodide was added to try and prevent iodine deficiency thyroid conditions, yet now there is an increase in hyperthyroidism.³

A distressing fact is that even those of us who have tried to obtain good quality salt by purchasing sea salt instead of common table salt, have in the majority of cases been cheated further. The product we get in return for the higher price we have paid for sea salt rather than normal table salt, may have originated from the sea, but nevertheless it may still have been totally refined, mechanically harvested with bulldozers, heated to extreme temperatures to crack its molecular structure and again robbed of its vital mineral content.³

And even worse, somewhere along the line a real scandal has occurred, which has resulted in the population being robbed of these minerals and being cheated into buying them back later. A bit like stolen goods for sale on the black market! Salt manufacturers make most of their money in fact, not from the sale of salt, but from the sale of the precious and vital minerals they extract from the salt.

These are then sold on to the pharmaceutical and health supplement industries to be marketed as mineral supplements or to the food industry to be added to processed food that has been stripped of most of its mineral content.³ The public is then sold this adulterated form of salt as table salt.

Around 80% of all sea salt producers now refine their salt.⁴ This processing does not just result in a degradation of salt's nutritional value, but actively contributes to destroying human health. When salt is processed it is heated to extremely high temperatures to prevent it becoming lumpy in humid weather. This heat processing alters the molecular structure of the salt so that now the molecules will not fully dissolve in solution. These insoluble shards are then passed into the blood stream and wear the arteries thin due to their abrasive action on the artery walls. These weak points in the arteries then become clogged with fats and may eventually break through causing embolism or heart attack.²

What are the vital ingredients in unrefined salt?

Unrefined sea salt and crystal salt is made up of 95-98% sodium chloride. It is the all-important remaining 2-5% that makes all the difference. This contains around 80-90 different elements made up of over 100 minerals – all essential for the healthy functioning of our bodies. This mineral composition is so complex that it cannot be reproduced, but exists in nature for mankind's use.^{3,4}

Some of the essential minerals in unrefined salt:

Chloride	Along with sodium, this regulates the body's acid/alkali balance. It is vital for gastric acid production. Also necessary for osmosis and electrolyte balance. ³
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Sodium	This regulates the pH of intracellular fluids. Along with potassium, it regulates the body's acid/alkali balance. Also necessary for osmosis and electrolyte balance. ³
Sulphur	Deficiency results in skin and nail diseases. It is found in all cells of the body. ³
Magnesium	Activates certain enzymes and important in amino acid synthesis, ATP activation and RNA and DNA synthesis. Relaxes muscles along the airways to the lungs, helping asthmatics breathe easier. ^{3,6}
Potassium	Regulates the body's acid/alkali balance and helps in correct kidney function. Helps convert glucose to glycogen and in the biosynthesis of protein. Extremely important for stimulating nerve impulses and contraction of muscles. ³
Calcium	Necessary for healthy bones and teeth. Muscles require calcium in order to contract and the heart requires calcium in order to beat. It is a cofactor for vitamin D and for the parathyroid gland. ³
Silicon	Necessary for the skeleton and a major component of osteoblast cells that form bone. ³
Carbon	Perhaps the single most important element to life. The carbon atom is a basic building block. ⁶
Iron	Vital for cells and blood. ³
Strontium	It is thought it may help the calcium-magnesium-phosphorus structures in the body. ³
Zinc	Vital for growth and the immune system. Also important in sexual development. It is a co-factor in at least 90 enzymes and is necessary for insulin synthesis. Considered to be antibacterial in preventing urinary tract infections and prostatitis. ³
Copper	Helps iron and vitamin C absorption, involved in protein synthesis and an important factor in DNA production. ³
Erbium	Stimulates metabolism. ¹
Tin	Necessary for normal growth. ³
Manganese	Important for glucose utilisation, lipid synthesis, lipid metabolism, cholesterol metabolism and for the development and functioning of the pancreas. ³
Cerium	It is possible that cerium salts stimulate metabolism. ¹
Fluoride	Has an effect on calcium and phosphate metabolism. ³
Rubidium	may serve as a mineral transporter across defective cell membranes. Studies have shown it increases memory and mental activity in the elderly. ³
Gallium	Found in the tissues. May stimulate metabolism.
Boron	Increases calcium absorption and utilisation. Thought to help convert vitamin D into its active form. ¹
Titanium	Acts as a stimulant. ⁶
Bromine	Thought to be an essential trace element. ⁶

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