HealthCheck360

Smarter Choices: Understanding Sodium & Sugar



Many packaged and restaurant foods contain more sodium and added sugar than you might expect. Understanding where they hide can help you make healthier choices and support your long-term health.

Why it Matters:

- Too much sodium may increase risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke.
- Too much added sugar can contribute to weight gain, type 2 diabetes, and tooth decay.

Sodium can hide in:

- Canned soups
- Deli meats
- Frozen meals
- Condiments and sauces
- Snack foods and crackers

Added sugar can hide in:

- Flavored yogurt
- Granola bars
- Breakfast cereals
- Coffee drinks
- Sports and energy drinks

Smart Label Reading:

- Choose foods with 140 mg of sodium or less per serving
- Aim for foods with 5 grams or less of added sugar per serving
- Remember: One 20-ounce soda can contain 15-17 teaspoons of added sugar, and a simple restaurant meal may contain an entire days worth of sodium!

Daily Recommendations:

Sodium: Less than 2,300 mg per day

Added Sugar: Up to 25 grams (women) or 36 grams (men) per day

Try These Simple Swaps:

- Instead of: Flavored yogurt, try plain Greek yogurt with your favorite fruit
- Instead of: Regular soda, try sparking water with citrus
- Instead of: Salty chips, try air popped popcorn
- Instead of: Processed deli meat, try fresh chicken, turkey, or tuna

You don't need to eliminate sodium or sugar completely. Reading labels, choosing more whole foods, and making small swaps can help you reduce intake and support better health over time.