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**About Salt - Part 2**

**Joe**

**This is Health Matters, continuing our report on salt.**

**Kristen**

**The body needs salt to function, but it needs the kind of salt that’s found in nature. That’s according to health experts concerned about the lack of natural salt in our diet. They claim that human bodies are not designed to assimilate refined salt. People are not getting the mineralized salt they need**

**because the American diet relies heavily on processed and packaged foods loaded with refined salt.**

**Joe**

**Refined salt has now been identified as a causal factor in autoimmune diseases. Such as multiple sclerosis, asthma, eczema (EX-em-ma) and alopecia (al-oh-PEE-shah). Alopecia is known as spot baldness. It’s an autoimmune condition in which hair falls out, usually from the scalp, because the body attacks its own hair follicles.**

**Taushona**

**It seems that refined salt increases the aggressiveness and the number of certain immune cells, causing inflammatory reactions that lead to disease, skin conditions and hair loss. Experiments in mice fed large amounts of refined salt caused a disease that is associated with multiple sclerosis in humans.**

**Kristen**

**It would be inaccurate to say that refined salt is the sole cause of autoimmune diseases. But the fact that refined salt is implicated in autoimmune disorders is not to be taken lightly. It definitely raises a red flag. How important is it to use natural salt? Should we be eliminating refined salt from our diet altogether?**

**Joe**

**That would be a tall order. That would mean not eating any processed food or fast food at all. It would mean using only natural salt to season your food, which can run you up to $5 --or more -- a pound. Should getting off refined salt be that extreme?**

**Taushona**

**Maybe for some. In any case, eating less refined salt is a wise move. Many governments around the world have instituted restrictions on the amount of salt that can be added to processed food. The U.S. government , however, has been reluctant to do this. As a result, U.S. fast food contains twice as much salt as other countries.**

**Kristen**

**The irony is that many low-fat food producers rely on heavy use of salt for flavor. So you eat low-fat food because your doctor recommends it and wind up getting more salt than your body can deal with. Until the use of salt is regulated, it’s the same old story. Consumer beware. The processed foods loading supermarket shelves contain basic ingredients that can undermine your health.**

**Joe**

**The Centers for Disease Control has identified bread as the number one source of refined salt consumption in the U.S. One 6-inch roasted garlic loaf from Subway contains as much refined salt as 14 strips of bacon. That’s just the bread, not the meat, cheese or anything else. Another irony. Bread, the staff of life, delivering too much salt.**

**Taushona**

**Salt is the most readily available nonmetallic mineral in the world. Natural salts contain dozens of trace minerals that are identical to the elements that make up our bodies. The chemical and mineral composition of our blood and body fluids are similar to sea water. We have salty tears and salty perspiration. The unborn baby rests in a sack of salty fluid.**

**Kristen**

**Getting back to the salt and water balance we discussed last week, water dissolves the minerals in natural salt into ions. These ions conduct nerve impulses that drive muscle movement and thought processes. So the minerals that natural salt provides are vital and we need to eat foods that provide them. It doesn’t have to be extreme. We need to eat nuts, fruits and vegetables and stop eating mineral-empty processed food and beverages.**

**Joe**

**As for what kind of salt to use in cooking, I vote for using real, unrefined salt. It’s available at natural food stores and at the North Coast Coop. And by the way that does not include the kind of sea salt you can buy in any supermarket. Commercial sea salt has also been bleached and refined.**

**Taushona**

**If your doctor has you on a low-salt diet, switching to natural salt doesn’t mean you can increase your salt intake. But it does mean the salt you’re allowed to use will be better for your health.**

**Joe**

**Health Matters is a production of KIDE Hoopa CA.  Produced and written by Cynthia Poten. Engineered by Joseph Orozco.  Our readers were Kristen Marshall, David Moon and Joseph Orozco.  For this audio and more information, visit our download area at  www.kidefm.org. Thank you for listening. Your health adds to the health of our community.**

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