



— Food for Health —


Wellness Newsletter

By Melanie Jatsek RD, LD, Heinein's Registered Dietitian

Lower Sodium Living

IN THIS ISSUE:

Club Fx Guide to Lower Sodium Living
Club Fx-Approved New Product Roundup
Recipe: No-Bake Peanut Butter Chocolate Protein Bars

A red heart is positioned on the left side of the bottom section. To its right, a glass salt shaker with a silver cap is tilted, pouring white salt onto a dark blue background. The salt forms a large, soft-edged pile.

“There is nothing noble in being superior to your fellow man; true nobility is being superior to your former self”

– *Earnest Hemingway*

CLUB FX GUIDE TO LOWER SODIUM LIVING

Our bodies naturally need some sodium to keep our muscles and nervous system healthy, however the average person consumes more than 3,400 mg of sodium each day— most of it coming from processed foods.

To put this in some context, consider the upper limit for sodium is less than 2,300 mg per day with an ideal limit being less than 1,500 mg* per day.

You may be wondering why there is such a campaign against excess sodium in the first place. Before I address that question, let's get a better understanding of the difference between sodium and salt.

Sodium vs. Salt

Sodium and salt are often used interchangeably, but they are not exactly the same. Sodium is a mineral that occurs naturally in small amounts in foods like celery, sweet potatoes, pineapple, and collard greens. Table salt, on the other hand, is about 40% sodium and 60% chloride.

Excess sodium in the average American diet is not the result of binging on broccoli and Brussels sprouts, rather it comes from the sodium added during food processing.

Reasons to Reduce Sodium

According to Dr. Michael Greger, MD, "There remains no single more effective public health action related to nutrition than the reduction of sodium in the diet."

Too much sodium in the diet:

- Causes high blood pressure. More than 100 randomized controlled trials demonstrate that when you cut down on salt, your blood pressure falls. And the more you cut back, the more it falls.
- Increases risk of stomach cancer, stroke, heart disease, and kidney disease
- Increases inflammation in the body
- May damage the microbiome—the collection of bacteria in your gut responsible for overall health and wellbeing.

In reality, our bodies have evolved to handle only around 750 milligrams of sodium per day. Healthy kidneys maintain a consistent level of sodium in the body by filtering blood and precisely adjusting reabsorption (retention) or excretion of sodium in the urine. But we shouldn't see that as a license to splurge on salty foods. We still need to take care of our body by feeding it less sodium.

Common Sources of Sodium

Sodium is found in abundance in processed foods, along with undesirable ingredients like refined sugars and industrial seed oils (i.e., corn oil, sunflower oil, etc.). Examples of these foods are:

- Frozen meals
- Canned products
- Deli meats
- Cheese
- Cereal
- Packaged convenience food (chips, pretzels, crackers)
- Bread
- Sauces
- Condiments

The real problem boils down to this: We are eating way too much sodium and not enough potassium, a blood pressure-lowering mineral naturally found in legumes and fresh fruits, vegetables, and leafy greens.

The Power of Potassium-Rich Foods

Our ancestors consumed large amounts of dietary potassium, to the tune of more than 10,000 milligrams a day. Current daily potassium recommendations are 3500-4700 milligrams, yet most of us don't even come close to the minimum. Do you want to guess why? That's right! We are overeating processed foods and undereating produce!

Check out these potassium-rich foods to see how easy it is to meet the minimum recommendations:

- **Legumes and beans (cooked):** Lentils (731 mg/cup), lima beans (955 mg/cup), kidney beans (717 mg/cup), and soybeans (886 mg/cup)
- **Baked potatoes with skin:** White potatoes (926 mg) and sweet potatoes (438 mg)
- **Fruit:** Avocado (975 mg/fruit), dried apricots (755 mg/half cup), prunes (637 mg/half cup), bananas (400-500 mg each), and cantaloupe (427 mg/cup cubed)
- **Vegetables (cooked):** Beet greens (1309 mg/cup), spinach (839 mg/cup), and acorn squash (896 mg/cup cubed)

Understanding Sodium Claims

If you're watching your sodium intake, you know that food labels can be confusing. Here are a few guidelines to help you make sense of the label claims:

- **Low sodium:** ≤ 140 mg of sodium per serving
- **Very low sodium:** ≤ 35 mg of sodium per serving
- **Sodium free:** < 5 mg of sodium per serving



CLUB FX GUIDE TO LOWER SODIUM LIVING *continued*

Understanding Sodium Claims

Low Sodium	Very Low Sodium	Sodium Free	Reduced Sodium	Light in Sodium	No Salt Added/Unsalted
≤ 140 mg OF SODIUM PER SERVING	≤ 35 mg OF SODIUM PER SERVING	< 5 mg OF SODIUM PER SERVING	AT LEAST 25% LESS SODIUM THAN ORIGINAL	AT LEAST 50% LESS SODIUM THAN ORIGINAL	No salt was added during processing, however the food may still contain a significant amount of sodium

- **Reduced sodium:** At least 25% less sodium than the original version
- **Light in sodium:** At least 50% less sodium than the original version
- **No salt added/unsalted:** No salt was added during processing, however the food may still contain a significant amount of sodium

Note: The recipe on the last page for No-Bake Peanut Butter Protein Bars is not only delicious, but it also qualifies as low sodium (only 96 mg of sodium per bar!).

Lower Sodium Solutions at Heinen's

I know how overwhelming it can be to read labels in search of lower sodium products. To ease the

burden, I created a two-page guide full of lower sodium Fx-approved products available at your local Heinen's. To access this resource, go to: www.heinens.com/stories/club-fx-guide-to-lower-sodium-living/

Remember, Heinen's Wellness Consultants are also available to assist you in reading labels and finding products to meet your health goals.

Key Takeaway

Our ancient ancestors were hunter-gatherers and ate from the earth. As a result, they were able to brilliantly meet their body's sodium demands. This points to the evolutionary truth that when you eat a whole food-based diet and listen to your body, it will never steer you wrong.

CLUB FX-APPROVED NEW PRODUCT ROUNDUP



One of the best parts of my job as Heinen's dietitian is evaluating new products worthy of a Club Fx-Approved stamp.

While several made the cut, these five deserve extra-special attention—they're 100% plant-based and versatile enough to fit into almost any meal plan.



Made in Nature Fig 'N' Oat Bars

Elevate your snack game without compromising taste, quality, or convenience! Made in Nature Fig 'N' Oat Bars are everything a healthy snack should be—no added sugar or preservatives, low in sodium, and made with real ingredients you could find in your own kitchen, like figs, dates, and oats.

On top of that, these individually wrapped soft and chewy bars are USDA organic, gluten and dairy-free, vegan, and come packed with 6 grams of fiber for staying power.

Head to the cereal aisle and grab a 5-count box in one of these yummy flavors: Original, Raspberry, or Strawberry.



Pirq Protein Shakes

Busy mornings happen—and when blending a smoothie isn't in the cards, Pirq (pronounced "perk") is the next best thing. This ready-to-drink smoothie is packed with fruits, veggies, and functional foods like broccoli sprouts, curcumin, turmeric, elderberry, and açai to support immune health and help reduce inflammation.

Each shake delivers 21 grams of satisfying plant protein with zero sugar. Find Pirq in vanilla, chocolate, or strawberry in the Grocery department, next to the shelf-stable milks.



Elmhurst Pistachio Milk

Move over almonds, there's a new milk-worthy nut in town! Technically seeds, pistachios are prized worldwide for their powerhouse nutritional profile, with protein, B vitamins, and a host of minerals and antioxidants being among their benefits. Pistachios make a perfect plant-based milk for smoothies, oats, and soups, thanks to their rich, buttery taste.

Elmhurst does an amazing job keeping it simple. Filtered water, pistachios, and Himalayan pink salt are the only ingredients you will find in this new plant-based milk.

Check out Elmhurst Pistachio Milk in the Grocery department with the other shelf-stable plant milks.



BodyHealth Perfect Amino®

Our body doesn't build muscle directly from meat or plant protein. Instead, it breaks protein down into its building blocks—amino acids—which are then used to build and repair muscle tissue.

BodyHealth's Perfect Amino® delivers the exact essential amino acids your body needs to build new protein—no extras, no excess calories. It's also sugar-free, sweetened only with the natural plant-based sweeteners monk fruit, stevia Reb M, and Katemfe fruit extract—derived from the fruit of the

Thaumatococcus daniellii plant, a tropical plant native to West Africa.

Mix Perfect Amino® with water or juice or blend into smoothies. For best results, take it away from other foods—either 30 minutes before eating or 1-2 hours after meals.

Perfect Amino® is 100% vegan and free of gluten, soy, sugar, dairy, and MSG, and is available in Heinen's Wellness Department in convenient single-serve travel packets or individual tubs in Unflavored, Mixed Berry and Lemon Lime flavors.

Key Takeaway

Here are a few meal and snack ideas using our new Club Fx-Approved products—I hope you enjoy them and feel inspired to try something new!

- **Breakfast:** Prepare a simple smoothie bowl using Elmhurst Pistachio Milk as the liquid base. Crumble a Made in Nature Fig 'N' Oat Bar on top for a little texture and natural sweetness.



Wildwood Organic Tofu

With all the buzz around protein lately, it's nice to know there are options beyond meat. Enter Wildwood Organic Tofu—a protein-rich, low-fat meat substitute that's also a decent source of calcium and iron.

Also called bean curd, tofu is made from soybeans, water, and a coagulant or curdling agent. On its own, tofu has a mild, neutral flavor, but when cooked, it acts like a sponge, soaking up the flavors of spices, sauces, and marinades.

You'll find Wildwood Organic Tofu in Heinen's Meat Department in three varieties:

- **Firm:** Great for gentle stir-fries, tacos, scrambles, and curries
- **Extra Firm:** Ideal for baking, grilling, sandwiches, and salads
- **Silken:** A custard-like texture that blends beautifully into smoothies, dips, sauces, and desserts

- **Lunch:** Pair a Pirq protein shake with a piece of citrus fruit and a leafy green salad using Heinen's Organic Super Energy mix.
- **Dinner:** Make tofu tacos using Wildwood Organic Firm Tofu.

- **Pre-workout snack:** Mix one scoop of Mixed Berry or Lemon Lime Perfect Amino® with 10-12 ounces of Elmhurst Pistachio Milk or water.

NO-BAKE PEANUT BUTTER CHOCOLATE PROTEIN BARS

The following recipe was written by Heinen's Chief Dietitian, Melanie Jatsek, RD, LD. Photography was provided by our partner, Yoko Segawa of Yoko's Kitchen.



Prep time: 10 minutes; Servings: 12

This recipe comes together in minutes and firms up in the freezer for easy slicing. Peanut butter provides richness and structure while plant-based protein and oats add staying power. Simple ingredients and minimal prep make these bars convenient to keep on hand for grab-and-go energy throughout the week.

Ingredients

- 1 cup One Degree Farms sprouted rolled oats
- 2 scoops Ancient Nutrition Chocolate Plant Protein+
- 2 Tbsp Heinen's chia seeds
- 1/2 cup unsweetened plant-based milk (almond, cashew, soy, walnut, or hemp)
- 1 cup Heinen's creamy natural peanut butter (not fresh ground)
- 2 Tbsp Heinen's raw honey

Instructions

1. Combine milk, peanut butter, and honey in a large bowl. Microwave for 15 seconds. Stir and microwave for an additional 15 seconds.
2. Add the remaining ingredients to the bowl.
3. Line an 8×8 pan with parchment paper and press the mixture evenly in the pan.
4. Freeze for at least 15 minutes. Cut into bars.
5. Store in an air-tight container in your freezer or fridge for up to one week.

Nutrition Information

Serving size: 1 Bar
Calories: 200 Carbohydrates: 15 grams
Protein: 10 grams
Total fat: 12 grams
Saturated fat: 2 grams
Fiber: 4 grams
Added sugar: 3 grams
Sodium: 96 mg
Potassium: 194 mg

Note: Nutrition information is provided as an estimate only.



Club Fx is a FREE program for Heinen's Tasteful Rewards members that offers education, nutrition tips, product recommendations and recipe inspiration for customers to live their healthiest lives. Interested in becoming a Club Fx member? [Update your Tasteful Rewards account](#) to ensure you get our weekly emails and access to personalized nutrition services!