

## Parents want salt on the agenda and off the table

**Media Release  
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**Caption: Zak Atkinson, 4, takes his toy truck up the 2.5kg salt 'mountain' the average Australian child consumes in a year**

In a consumer poll released by the Australian Division of World Action on Salt (AWASH), 86% of parents interviewed wanted more action taken on the hidden 'killer' in their children's food. Children who consume more than the recommended\* amount of salt are exposed to increased risk of high blood pressure, which is a major contributor to cardiovascular diseases.

Some 3.5 million Australians suffer from such diseases, which are often caused by preventable factors such as diet and exercise levels. Based on current diet information, children are likely to be consuming more than twice their recommended salt intake, putting them at increased risk of debilitating disease in later life.

Parent of two, Shalani McCray said, "I purchase low salt options in the supermarket and make most of my children's food from scratch, so I'm aware of how much salt is in their diet. It's hard to manage though."

A George Institute hosted "Drop the Salt" debate yesterday was attended by Senator Jan McLucas and senior food industry representatives including the Australian Food and Grocery Council. There was overwhelming support from a packed audience of health professionals, dieticians and medical experts for a concerted approach from Government, the food industry and parents to control children's salt intake to help avert a looming health crisis.

The road to lower salt will not be an easy one, warned Bruce Neal Chair of AWASH, as much of the salt children consume is 'hidden' in some of their favourite foods such as bread, breakfast cereals, processed meats and pizzas. "That's why it's so important for Government and the food industry to support parents with good information, clear food labeling and low salt product choices. The rewards of doing this, measured in a healthier future for our kids, must be worth the effort", he said. Tips for parents on how to reduce salt in their children's diet can be found at [www.awash.org.au](http://www.awash.org.au).

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\*The Australian National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recommends a maximum upper level of 3.5g salt per day for 4-8 year olds, and 5g for 9-13 year olds.