

# DEATH BY PIZZA

Media Release  
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**A new analysis has revealed that 94% of pizzas sold in Australia are overloaded with salt.**

**Just 3 slices of takeaway pizza can contain the entire daily salt intake for an adult, which is 4 grams per day.**

Salt is a leading cause of high blood pressure, and high blood pressure causes more deaths than anything else. According to experts, it's the hidden salt in many of our every day foods that causes this serious health risk.

The pizza with the highest sodium was **Pizza Hut's BBQ Meat Lovers**, which provided **327%** of an adult's recommended daily amount of salt (13 grams). More than two thirds of takeaway pizzas contained double the daily recommended amount of salt for an adult and four takeaway pizzas contained as much as three times.

"Bread, processed meats and cheese are all high salt products so combining them into one meal eaten in fairly large amounts as a pizza is deadly. Government action is needed to ensure that the food industry is held to account. Food manufacturers, restaurants and cafes, contract caterers and fast food companies have a responsibility to reduce salt in foods. Consumers must also play their part by making sensible food choices", said Jacqui Webster, Coordinator of the Australian Division of World Action on Salt and Health at The George Institute.

The truth about the amount of salt in pizzas will be revealed in a new series called FOOD INVESTIGATORS airing on SBS next Wednesday May 20 at 7.30pm. Dr Renee Lim will investigate one of the biggest dangers to our national health: salt. She finds out where it's hiding in our food and asks why it's taking so long to get it out of our diet.

Nearly all supermarket bought pizzas had less salt than takeaway pizzas. The pizza with the lowest amount of salt (overall) was **McCain Pizza Singles Ham & Pineapple**, which contained 63% of the recommended daily intake (2.5 grams of salt)

In addition to checking the label and buying low salt foods when we do our weekly grocery shop, all of us can benefit from eating less salt by following these guidelines when eating out:

1. When ordering pizza, choose vegetable or chicken toppings instead of pepperoni, bacon, or extra cheese.
2. When buying ready to eat packaged foods, choose low-salt options: compare products to find the one lowest in salt using the per 100g column on the Nutrition Information Panel.
3. Limit fast foods such as burgers, fried chicken and pizza.
4. Keep healthy snacks such as dried fruit & nuts or fresh fruit at hand.
5. When dining out at a restaurant, ask for sauces and other condiments to be served on the side rather than on the meal.
6. Don't add salt to your food at the table when dining out.
7. Avoid ordering dishes that contain high salt ingredients including Asian sauces, cured meats and cheeses.
8. Don't be afraid to ask the restaurant or take-away food outlet about the salt content of their meals and ask them not to salt the fries!

###ENDS###

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**Notes to editors:**

1. Food Investigators: Surprising information about food that may just change your appetite and life! We're all fascinated by what we eat. This new 13-part series will investigate food; explore the myths, the hidden nasties, and just what is good, or not good, for us in our diet.
2. The Australian Division of World Action on Salt and Health (AWASH) is a growing network of individuals and organisations concerned with salt and its effects on health. The mission of AWASH is to improve the health of Australians by achieving a gradual population-wide reduction in dietary salt consumption that will reduce cardiovascular diseases and other salt-related health problems.
3. This press release has been issued by the AWASH Secretariat, which coordinates the day-to-day activities of AWASH and takes final responsibility for all outputs from AWASH. The Secretariat is informed by an Advisory Group which comprises a larger set of individuals with expertise in a range of different areas pertinent to the activities of AWASH.
4. Take-away outlets included in this report included Pizza Hut, Dominoes and Eagle Boys. Supermarket-bought brands included McCain, Papa Giuseppe's, Coles Smart Buy, Woolworths Home Brand and Deli Express and Weight Watchers. There were 115 take-away pizzas and 41 supermarket-bought pizzas included in the report.
5. Sodium values for take-away pizzas were obtained from company websites. Serving sizes (slices) for takeaway pizzas were as per company websites. Pizza size was estimated at 8 slices per pizza. Sodium values per serve for supermarket-bought pizzas were obtained from each product's nutrition information panel and pizza size was estimated as the size of the packaged product.
6. The National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia has set a Suggested Dietary Target of 1600mg sodium (4g salt) for overall health.
7. Salt is listed on food labels as sodium. To convert grams of sodium into grams of salt, you have to multiply by 2.5.