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Deborah Rhoades, M.A., R.D
Extension Educator, Family & Consumer Sciences

SENIOR CENTERS OFFER SODIUM SENSIBILITY CLASS

Chances are there is someone in your family circle who has high blood pressure, also known as hypertension. State Department statistics report 4.9% of Frederick County residents have it; the lowest incidence rate in the State. Uncontrolled high blood pressure can markedly increase your risk of stroke, heart attack, and kidney disease.

On average, the higher a person’s sodium intake, the higher their blood pressure. Medical research on adults documents that as sodium intake decreases, so does blood pressure. The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend we all reduce our sodium intake to <2300 mg/day or less. People 51 and older and those of any age who are African American or have hypertension, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease should limit sodium to only 1500 mg per day. This applies to about half of the US population.

Removing the salt shaker from the table is a good first step towards lowering sodium intake. Identifying and limiting the “hidden” sodium found in our food supply can make an even greater impact, since 77% of the sodium in our diet, comes from restaurant and processed foods.

As we age, blood pressure increases, so seniors are naturally a target audience for education. Local seniors can join me during the month of August for a “Sodium Sensibility” class at their local senior center in Frederick County. The class will cover how to create delicious low sodium meals through meal preparation techniques and the use of new reduced/low sodium foods. Participants will sample a variety of new products and receive tips and recipes to help them “shake the salt” habit.

Specific class times, dates and locations:

12:15 PM -- Wednesday, August 8th, Emmitsburg, (301) 600-6350
12:30 PM -- Thursday, August 16th, Frederick, (301) 600-3525
11:00 AM – Thursday, August 23rd, Brunswick, (301) 834-8115
12:30 PM – Wednesday, August 29th, Urbana, (301) 600-7020
While attending the class, make a reservation to have lunch at the senior center. You will likely make some new friends and get a “taste” of what the congregate meal program has to offer. Reservations must be made by 9:30 AM; two days in advance by calling the center, see telephone numbers listed above. Meals are automatically planned to be low in sodium. Menus are posted on The Department of Aging website at [http://www.frederickcountymd.gov/index.aspx?NID=158](http://www.frederickcountymd.gov/index.aspx?NID=158)

Limiting your intake of salt and sodium does not mean you must endure a diet of bland and flavorless foods. Choosing alternative seasonings and preparation methods can improve the flavor, and reduce the salt. Come to a class to learn more and try these recipes at home.

**HERB SEASONING BLEND**

**Makes about 1/3 cup**

Note: Use in place of salt in casseroles, stews, fresh vegetables, and meats. Use on the table as an all-purpose replacement for the salt shaker.

- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 teaspoon dried marjoram
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley
- 1 teaspoon dried savory
- 1 teaspoon ground mace
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground sage

Place all ingredients in a small bowl. Toss gently until well blended. Store in an airtight container in a cool, dry, dark place for up to 6 months.

**CHICKEN A L’ORANGE**

**Serves 4**

Note: Each serving contains only 98 milligrams of sodium.

- 2-1/2 pound frying chicken, cut in pieces, skin and visible fat removed
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons freshly grated orange peel
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup water
- 1-1/2 cups orange juice
- 2 tablespoons firmly packed brown sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 cup finely chopped pecans

Combine flour, orange peel, paprika, and black pepper. Set aside 2 tablespoons of flour mixture and coat chicken pieces with the remainder. Brown chicken in oil in a large, nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Pour off fat. Add water. Cover and simmer over low heat 30 minutes or until done. Remove chicken to platter and cover with foil to keep warm. Pour drippings from pan, reserving 2 tablespoons and discarding the remainder. Return the reserved 2 tablespoons of drippings to the skillet over medium-high heat. Add reserved seasoned flour mixture; blend well. Add orange juice, brown sugar, ginger, and cinnamon. Cook, stirring constantly, until thickened. Serve chicken topped with orange sauce and pecans.

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Deborah Rhoades, MA, RD, LDN, is a licensed Registered Dietitian and Extension Educator in Family and Consumer Sciences.

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