



## EASY ON THE SALT

By Judith Riddle

By now, you've probably heard about the controversial study published in July that challenged seemingly irrefutable scientific evidence, stating that lowering salt intake can prevent hypertension and reduce blood pressure in people who already have the disease, decreasing the risk of heart attack and stroke later in life.

The Cochrane review, published in the *American Journal of Hypertension*, reported that the cardioprotective benefits of salt reduction couldn't be proven based on current evidence.

When I first heard this news, I must admit, I felt happy. As one who's dealt with blood pressure issues for the past six years, I know all too well how difficult it is to cut back on salt. So hearing about this study was like music to my ears—and a ray of hope for my taste buds.

Did this mean I could pick up the salt shaker again and use it with reckless abandon? Did it mean I could return to eating potato chips, pretzels, and other salty snacks without feeling guilty?

No!

As quickly as the report hit the airwaves, another group of researchers from the United Kingdom reanalyzed the current data and countered the Cochrane review's claims, steering everyone back to the already established evidence that indubitably shows that reducing the amount of sodium in your diet can prevent and lower blood pressure.

To hear what colleagues are saying about this controversy, turn to page 40 to read "The Great Salt Debate." Nutrition professionals like you shed light on the link between sodium and heart disease risk and offer strategies you can use to counsel patients who have questions.

The Heart Beat column, "Lowering Blood Pressure," discusses a new study that examines the power of soy protein in reducing systolic blood pressure, and it's chock full of soy products you can tell your clients about.

In "A Healthful Dose of Bacteria," we review various foods—in addition to yogurt—that are great sources of probiotics—those live microorganisms that, when ingested, promote gastrointestinal health.

And our Practice Matters column, "Resolving Conflict," offers a wealth of tips on how to communicate effectively when broaching difficult conversations in the workplace.

Enjoy the issue!

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