



# TIPS FOR REDUCING SODIUM WITHOUT SACRIFICING TASTE OR PARTICIPATION



## FROM THE EXPERTS: REAL STRATEGIES FROM CHILD NUTRITION DIRECTORS

*We asked food service directors for strategies that worked for them as they reduced sodium in their meals. Here's what they told us.*

### ASK FOR STUDENT FEEDBACK



Kids' feedback is one of the most important measures of school meal success. Try conducting student taste tests before introducing a new menu item, or offer it for a limited time only, and ask for their suggestions.

### RIGHT-SIZE PORTIONS



By reducing the portion size of items, especially more "indulgent" items that appear on the menu periodically, you can dramatically reduce sodium.

### EXPERIMENT WITH SPICES



Whether you're using less salt while cooking from scratch, or buying lower-sodium products, spices can add major flavor to help with palatability. For older students, a spice bar can allow them to customize with various flavors for themselves. As another option, a Director in Pennsylvania prefers to provide small packets of no-sodium seasoning blends.

### START AN HERB GARDEN



Using herbs from a student-led herb garden allows students to feel ownership in the food they're eating. Ask a science teacher if they would be willing to incorporate the garden into their lesson plans for more hands-on garden time. When using herbs from the garden, flaunt it! Titles like "Zesty Burrito Bowl with Cilantro from our Garden" will be sure to draw students in.

### TRY ROASTING VEGETABLES OR SERVE THEM RAW



"Roasting vegetables retains more flavor than steaming," says a Child Nutrition Coordinator in Alabama. Roasted vegetables are also a great canvas for adding herbs and spices!

However, one size doesn't fit all! "Raw vegetables go over better than cooked ones," a Food Service Director from Kentucky told us.

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