



## MEDICAL CONDITIONS

# HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE AND SALT INTAKE

**South Africa has one of the highest rates of hypertension in the world. 6.3 million South Africans are living with high blood pressure.**

There are 130 heart attacks and 240 strokes daily in South Africa. And 80% of these can be prevented. New research conducted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) has concluded that "South Africa has the highest rate of uncontrolled hypertension in human history."

### ***What is hypertension?***

Hypertension is the leading risk factor for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart attack, stroke, aneurysm, heart failure, organ failure, and trouble with concentration and memory, and your risk can be greatly influenced by how much salt you have in your diet. A diet high in salt is also associated with gastric cancer, osteoporosis, increased asthma severity, and obesity. Hypertension does not usually have any symptoms so you may not know you have it until it is too late.

### ***Foods high in salt***

There are certain foods to be aware of because they may have high salt content:

- Bread
- Margarine
- Butter spreads
- Stock cubes
- Soup powders
- Breakfast cereals
- Savoury snacks

### ***What should you do?***

Here are some general tips for reducing your overall salt intake to lower your risk of deadly hypertension:

- **Make it a habit.** You can learn not to add salt to your food and teach your taste buds to enjoy the flavour of food without salt.
- **Make it fresh.** Choose fresh fruit and vegetables. Packaged foods may contain high amounts of add salt used as a preservative.
- **Make it flavourful.** Add fresh herbs and spices to your food to boost the flavour instead of using salt. Garlic, lemon juice, and fresh chilli are wonderful flavour boosters.
- **Make it better.** When you eat out, choose restaurants over fast food outlets as take aways may contain more salt.