



Canadian Stroke Network

Réseau canadien contre
les accidents cérébrovasculaires

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Stroke researchers applaud recommendations in ‘Food Guide’ to reduce salt intake

OTTAWA – For the first time, Canada’s ‘Food Guide’ sends a strong message about the health risks associated with over-consumption of salty foods and the impact on public health, says the Scientific Director of the Canadian Stroke Network.

“This is important recognition that excess sodium consumption contributes to high-blood pressure, the leading risk factor for stroke,” says Dr. Antoine Hakim. “By encouraging Canadians to be more aware of the risk of adding salt to food and of consuming foods with high levels of sodium, Health Canada is helping to reduce the incidence of high-blood pressure and hypertension.”

The ‘Food Guide’ calls on Canadians to limit their intake of salt and to carefully read food labels. It recommends that consumers select foods low in sodium and prepared with little or no added salt.

Canadians eat, on average, 3,100 milligrams of sodium a day -- more than twice the daily recommended adequate intake of 1,500 mg. Most comes from prepared, pre-packaged and ‘fast’ foods. As well, Canadians eat a lot of bread and cereal, which also contains unnecessary added sodium.

The Canadian Stroke Network (CSN) is working with other national organizations to raise awareness about the dangers of excessive sodium consumption and it has advocated for these ‘Food Guide’ changes.

“Canada’s Food Guide plays such a central role in defining what constitutes healthy eating,” says Dr. Hakim, who heads up the national network of university- and hospital-based stroke researchers. “Messaging on the importance of dietary sodium is critical to helping Canadians make healthy food choices.”

Stroke, a leading cause of death and adult disability, is a major public health issue in Canada. More than 50,000 Canadians have a stroke every year and an estimated 300,000 individuals are coping with the devastating after-effects of stroke. However, stroke is largely preventable through healthy eating, exercise, blood pressure and weight control.

About the Canadian Stroke Network (www.canadianstrokenetwork.ca)

The Canadian Stroke Network includes more than 100 of Canada's leading scientists and clinicians from 24 universities who work collaboratively on various aspects of stroke. The Network, which is headquartered at the University of Ottawa, also includes partners from industry, the non-profit sector, provincial and federal governments. The Canadian Stroke Network, one of Canada's Networks of Centres of Excellence, is committed to reducing the physical, social and economic impact of stroke on the lives of individual Canadians and on society as a whole.

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