

## Check labels to avoid a salty taste

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At a time when people are making resolutions to eat more healthily, Kent Trading Standards is advising consumers to check the levels of salt in food, particularly in light snacks or lunch foods that may not be obviously salty.

In recent tests, Kent Trading Standards found that Chinese-style soups and sushi can both contain a high amount of salt.

The selection of soups tested were bought from restaurants and cafes, so nutritional information wasn't readily available for consumers. Eight of the 15 soups tested contained over half the daily recommended maximum salt intake for an adult, which is 6g a day. One of the soups tested contained almost the entire daily amount.

Eleven samples of pre-packed sushi were also tested and they all had labels, so salt levels could be easily checked by consumers. The salt in the tested samples ranged from 1.0g to 5.2g. Seven of the samples contained at least half the daily recommended maximum salt intake for an adult and one product contained almost the entire daily level. The accompaniments served with the sushi, for example soy sauce, contributed to the salt content, so cutting back on the accompaniments can be a way to reduce the amount being eaten.

Consumers are advised to ask restaurants or caterers if they're not sure about the salt content of food and ask if a lower salt version is available. When purchasing packaged goods, consumers are advised to look out for the Food Standards Agency's traffic light labelling that indicates salt levels.

Kent Trading Standards is also working with businesses to encourage a reduction in the amount of salt used in cooking and manufacture, or to use lower salt products such as low-salt stocks for soups.

Richard Strawson, Area Manager for Kent County Council's Kent Trading Standards said: "Like any food, these products have their place in a balanced diet and we're working to help people know what they're eating and be able to make informed decisions.

"A food doesn't have to taste salty to have a high level of salt, so our advice is check labels and ask questions."

More information about food contents and labelling is available on the Foods Standards Agency website.