

**Na:** Sodium is essential for muscle movement, including that of the heart, to the peristaltic movement of the digestive tract, and to the transmission of messages by the nerve cells. It helps to maintain the concentration of body fluids at correct levels. It also plays a central role in the transmission of electrical impulses in the nerves, and helps cells to take up nutrients.

**Cl:** Chloride and other chlorine compounds play an essential role in a delicate balancing act: providing for the electrical neutrality and the correct pressure to the body fluids, and in keeping the acid-base balance of the body. The chloride ion produces hydrochloric acid required for digestion and is present in salivary amylase.



# For a few grains of salt

## Salt in my kitchen

We don't put salt in our food just for taste and nutrition. Check out the many uses of salt in the kitchen:

**Preservation:** Salt fights bacteria that attack food. It was in the preservation business long before refrigerator was invented.

**Binding:** It binds together pieces of meat and helps save cooking time and fuel in the process.

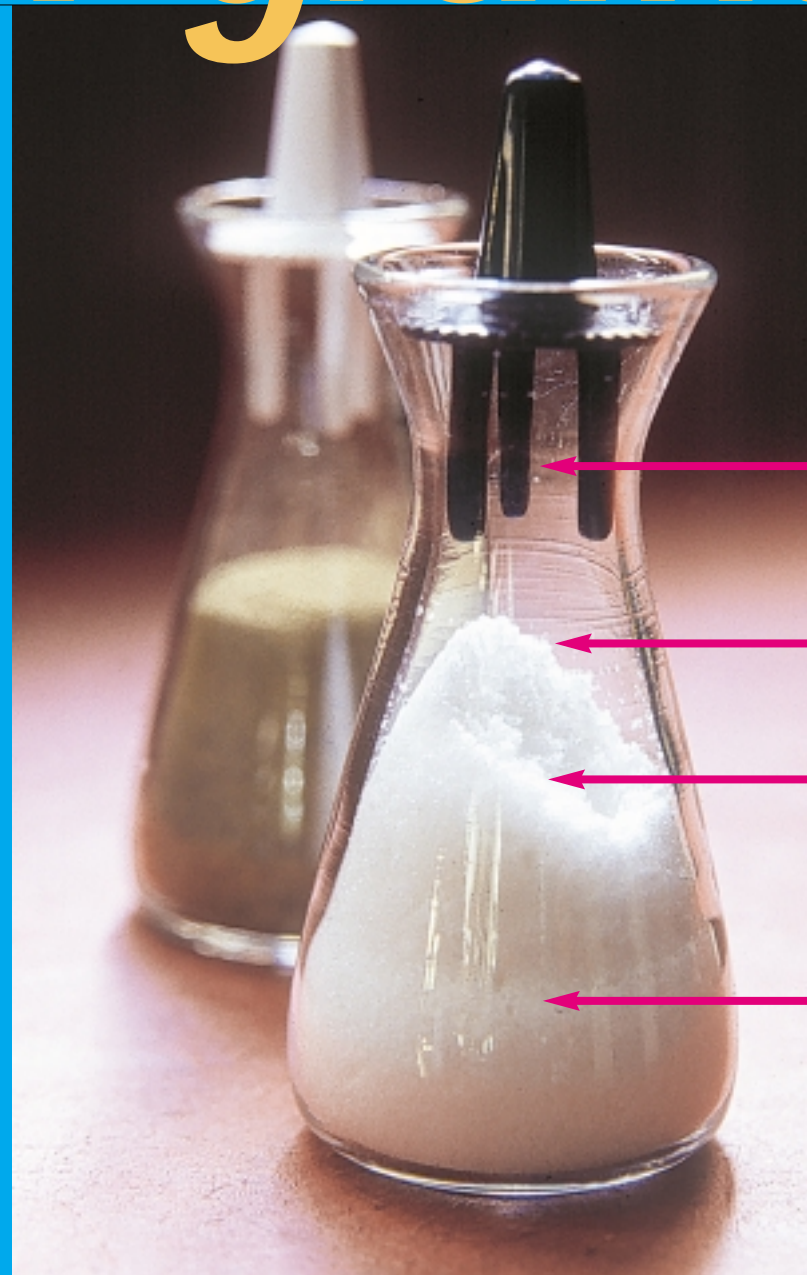
**Fermentation:** It controls the fermentation rate to the right level in pickles and baked products.

**Colouring:** The rich meat colour in hamburgers and pizzas and the golden colour in bread are all thanks to salt.

**Changing Texture:** Adding a pinch of salt to rotis makes them softer. It also gives dough more strength.

### CAUTION FOR BABIES

Young babies do not have the capacity to process large quantities of salt as the kidneys are not yet developed. Baby foods are supposed to contain lower levels of salt, and it is recommended that if adult foods are to be given, unprocessed foods should be used, and no salt added.



## HOW MUCH DOES OUR BODY REQUIRE?

**8 gms a day**

**Body requires it for:** A principal function of salt is to regulate osmotic pressure and the movement of fluid to and from the cell.

**NONE:** You can't do without it. Salt is the only edible item present on every dining table in the world.

**TOO MUCH:** Can lead to hypertension, heart, liver and kidney diseases.

**ENOUGH:** Keeps our bodies from drying up and attacks germs to keep us healthy.

**TOO LESS:** Muscles won't contract, blood won't circulate, food won't digest and the heart won't beat. Chronic salt deprivation produces loss of weight and appetite, inertia, nausea and muscular cramps.

**NO SALT, NO LIFE:** Life began in the ocean, the largest source of salt and the origin of all organic material. In our daily life: after heavy exercise the body requires salt; and we are usually thirsty after eating salty food.