

TARIKH	23 MAY 2025 (JUMAAT)	SURATKABAR	BH / UM / NST / TS / HM / KOSMO
TAJUK ARTIKEL	THE SCIENCE OF SALT		
M/S	8 (HEALTH)	KATA KUNCI	SALT
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By BARBARA INTERMILL

I HAVE a weird habit of checking out food labels; it goes with the job.

This one really grabbed my attention. It was on an electrolyte beverage and stated its case for the 1,000mg of sodium in each 16-ounce (473ml) can.

"Welcome to the Salty Rebellion," the label reads.

"The latest science reveals we've misunderstood salt.

"Electrolytes, particularly sodium and potassium, are the driving force behind energy production in our cells, nerves, and muscles — but many of us have yet to unlock their full benefits.

"That's why we say MORE SALT, NOT LESS."

Sure enough, the nutrients (which are also electrolytes) in this beverage are salt (sodium chloride), magnesium and potassium, with some added natural flavours and stevia leaf sweetener.

Electrolytes — essential minerals such as sodium, calcium,

The science of salt



potassium and magnesium — are named for their ability to carry an electric charge when dissolved in water or other body fluids such as blood.

It's important to maintain the right level of sodium in our body as too much or too little can both cause health problems. — TNS

In our bodies, they help trigger the action of nerves and the contraction of muscles.

And they are crucial to keep the fluids inside and outside of our cells in balance.

Sodium is the most abundant electrolyte in the body.

If we have too little or too much, serious health issues can result in a hurry.

Sodium is a major determinant of blood pressure, for example.

So excess is not good, but neither is a deficiency.

Believe it or not, science has not yet determined what amount of daily sodium is the best for everyone.

Many experts say we should not exceed 2,300mg a day.

Others say somewhere between 3,000 to 5,000 mg is more realistic.

It's my view that one size does not fit all.

Athletes and people who sweat a lot usually need more sodium.

People with high blood pressure or poor kidney function generally need less.

That's why a universal claim on a beverage for "more salt, not less" is scary.

The only way to determine if you need 1,000mg of extra sodium in your diet is to count how much you're already eating in your food.

Most of us have no idea.

If much of your food comes in a package or from a restaurant, you can rest assured you're getting more sodium

than you know.

A typical fast food cheeseburger and medium order of fries, for example, contains 1,000mg of sodium, plus a fair share of potassium and magnesium.

Unprocessed foods such as fresh produce, fresh meat, fish, poultry, eggs and dairy foods also contain sodium in much smaller amounts.

And if you salt your food?

One teaspoon of salt contains 2,360mg of sodium.

Curious if you need that extra 1,000mg of sodium from a beverage?

Check food labels for a few days and count how much sodium you really eat.

No label?

Look it up at USDA Food Data Central (<https://fdc.nal.usda.gov>).

Then talk to your healthcare provider to see if you need more or less sodium in your diet. — Tribune News Service

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