

THE STATE OF SALT IN NEW ZEALAND

A case for increased government leadership in food reformulation

The Stroke Foundation of New Zealand commissioned the National Institute of Health Innovation to research the content of salt in pre-packaged sauces widely available in New Zealand's supermarkets. The results show that the salt content of **60% of 1,052 sauces sold in New Zealand is unacceptably high** and that there is an urgent need for the introduction of government-led salt reformulation targets.

Why?

Most New Zealanders consume double the maximum recommended daily intake of salt and most of this comes from processed foods. Too much salt in our diet contributes to high blood pressure, which affects more than one in five New Zealanders. As high blood pressure significantly increases the risk of stroke, the Stroke Foundation is calling for the introduction of government-led reformulation targets for processed foods commonly high in salt, such as sauces, sausages, chips, and snacks^{1,2}.

Each year, there are approximately **9,500 strokes in New Zealand, at an annual cost of over \$1.1bn to our society**. Last year, the World Health Organization listed reducing salt intake, through food reformulation, as a 'best buy' for controlling non-communicable diseases such as stroke, heart disease, diabetes and cancer³.

75% of all strokes are preventable, with lowering blood pressure being a key prevention strategy that people can readily work towards in their daily lives, by reducing salt intake. This would be made even more achievable for all New Zealanders through the introduction of government-led salt reformulation targets.

OUR RESEARCH FINDINGS FOR PRE-PACKAGED SAUCES



THE SALT CONTENT OF SOME PRE-PACKAGED SAUCES IN NZ IS **EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH**

6/10

SAUCES SOLD IN NEW ZEALAND DON'T MEET VOLUNTARY SALT TARGETS

THE SALT CONTENT OF PRE-PACKAGED SAUCES VARIES GREATLY, E.G. SOME SAUCES CONTAINED

4000x

4000 TIMES MORE SALT THAN SIMILAR SAUCES.

THIS SHOWS THAT PRODUCT REFORMULATION IS FEASIBLE

A SINGLE SERVING OF SOME SAUCES WAS **CLOSE TO AN ADULT'S MAXIMUM DAILY RECOMMENDED SALT INTAKE**



GOVERNMENT-LED SALT REFORMULATION TARGETS FOR PRE-PACKAGED SAUCES ARE RECOMMENDED ALONG WITH REDUCTIONS IN OTHER PROCESSED FOOD CATEGORIES

GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO ACT TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF ALL NEW ZEALANDERS AND REDUCE THE BURDEN OF STROKE ON OUR SOCIETY.

¹ Stroke Foundation of New Zealand. Bring on better bangers – New research reveals high salt content of sausages in New Zealand. Media release 27 January 2021. Available from: <https://bit.ly/3idkxQ6>

² Stroke Foundation of New Zealand. The ugly truth about salty snacks and stroke. Media release 26 November 2021. Available from: <https://bit.ly/3tdOy8Q>

³ WHO 2021 Saving lives: Spending Less: the case for investing in noncommunicable diseases. Accessed February 2021 <https://www.who.int/publications-detail-redirect/9789240041059>