

New research reveals cheese saltier than seawater

29 November 2012

New research from CASH (Consensus Action on Salt and Health) at Queen Mary, University of London, has revealed the unnecessarily high levels of salt in a staple of the country's shopping baskets – cheese.

The CASH team looked at 772 [cheese](#) products available in UK supermarkets and found many were unnecessarily high in [salt](#). A number of products (including Roquefort, Feta and Halloumi) were found to be saltier by [concentration](#) than [seawater](#) and, while less salty than these, Cheddar cheese was still found to contain more salt than a packet of crisps with an average of 0.52g salt per 30g portion.

Eaten almost daily in lunchtime sandwiches, grated on pasta dishes or as an evening snack with [crackers](#) – cheese is a big part of the UK diet and is the 3rd biggest contributor of salt to the UK diet, after bread and [bacon](#).

Examples of Cheddar and Cheddar-style cheese with high salt content (per 30g portion)

- Morrisons: Smooth & Tangy Farmhouse Cheddar – 0.63g
- Waitrose: West Country Farmhouse Cheddar – 0.58g
- Taw Valley Creamery: Tickler Extra Mature Cheddar – 0.57g
- Kerry LowLow: Mature Cheese – 0.57g
- Pilgrims Choice: Strong and Punchy Lighter Extra Mature Cheese – 0.57g

Katharine Jenner, Campaign Director of CASH, at Queen Mary said: "We already know most cheese is high in fat; however we often add it to our meals without thinking how much salt it contains. This survey shows that just one portion of cheese (30g)

can contain more salt than a packet of crisps, so it's worth looking at the label and choosing a lower salt version of your favourite cheese, or just use a little less next time you get the grater out. We should all be eating less than 6g salt a day, about a teaspoon, yet we are currently eating much more (8.1g salt/day)."

Examples of Cheddar and Cheddar-style cheese with lower [salt content](#) (per 30g portion)

- Wyke Farm: Super Light – 0.37g
- Morrisons: Wm English Extra Mature Cheddar – 0.39g
- M&S: Keen's Farmhouse Cheddar Handmade in Moorhayes Farm Somerset - 0.44g
- The Co-operative: Healthier Choice Mild White Cheese - 0.45g
- Waitrose: Reduced Fat Lighter Mild Cheese – 0.47g

CASH's tips for making healthier choices:

- Compare nutrition labels & choose the lower salt and lower saturated fat option;
- Have smaller portions – 30g is about the size of a matchbox;
- Use it less often. Cheese should be eaten in moderation as part of a balanced diet; and
- You may find you need to use less cheese if you use a stronger flavoured cheese

CASH is a group of specialists concerned with salt and its effects on health. They are based at Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry, part of Queen Mary.

Visit www.actiononsalt.org.uk for further information.

Provided by Queen Mary, University of London

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