

DEACONESS HOSPITAL

# Reduces Sodium and Costs

with Home-Style Cooking



Deaconess Hospital  
ROCKWOOD HEALTH SYSTEM

*"As a cardiologist, I can tell you that you have saved many people from heart attacks, stroke, dialysis with just this simple change."*

*~ Dr. Ellie Mueller*



Deaconess Team

## The Challenge

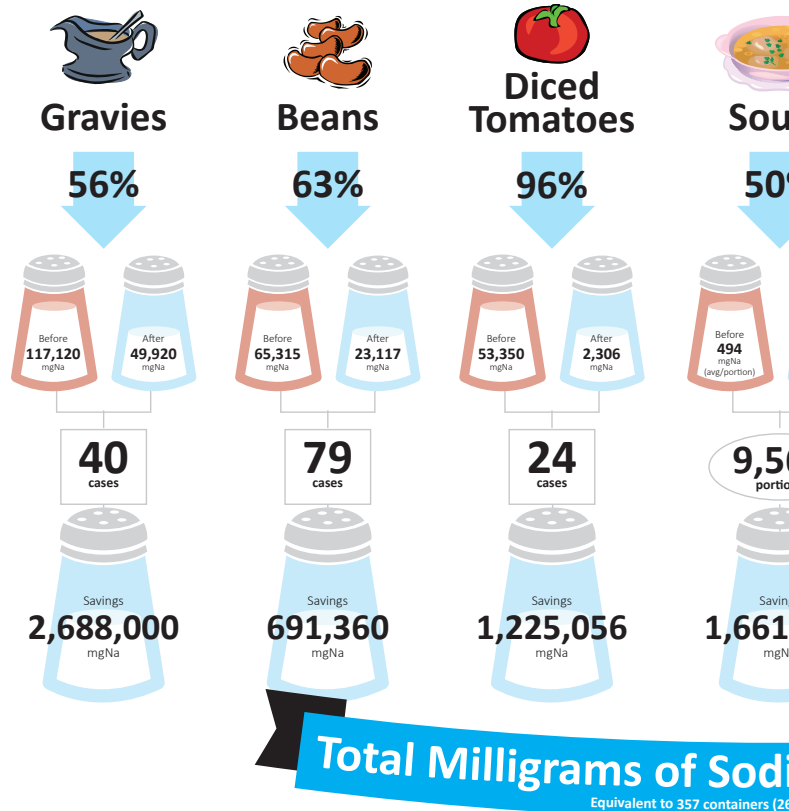
As more people depend on cafeterias and restaurants for a large percentage of their daily food, it is important that these food outlets work toward sodium reduction. Food served at these locations often contains high amounts of sodium before they even reach the plate. This can lead to eating more than 1,000 milligrams of sodium above the recommended amount.

Lower sodium options are available but are often overlooked for fear of losing customers. Additionally, managers and cooks, in fast-paced food service environments, don't have the time to find lower sodium products and create recipes using these products.

In Spokane County, where one in three adults has high blood pressure, reducing sodium in these foods may be one of the ways to help lower customers' blood pressure and their possible risk for heart disease and stroke.

## What Worked and Why

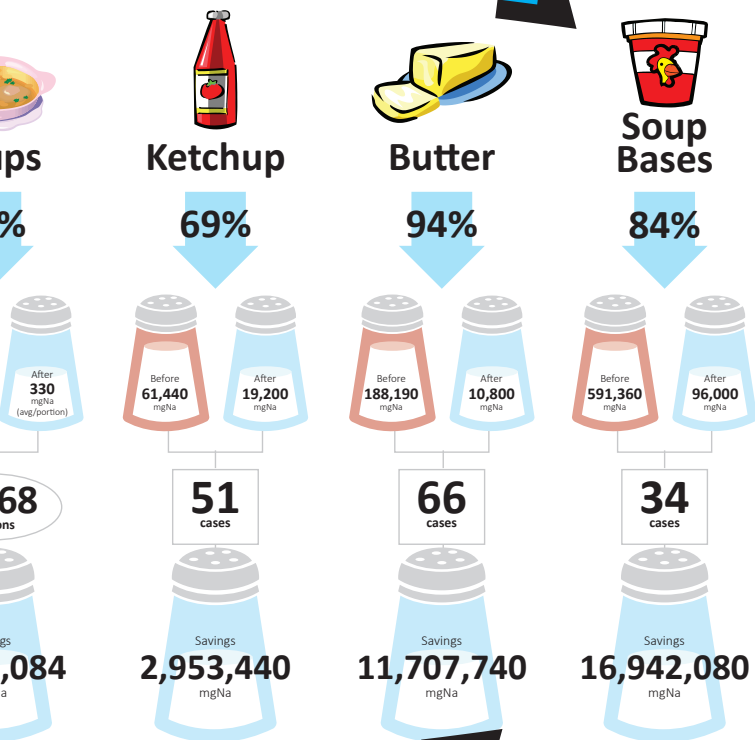
In October 2015, the Sodium Reduction project came into focus when the Deaconess Director of Food Services, Eric Pruett, and Dr. Ellie Mueller, a cardiologist at Deaconess talked about the high sodium in soups made in-house. Based on this conversation, Pruett replaced the soup bases with lower sodium ones. This product change resulted in a 33% reduction in sodium and no loss in cafeteria food sales. Dr. Mueller acknowledged the sodium reduction changes by stating, "The soups are indeed more delicious and healthier at Deaconess. As a cardiologist, I can tell you that you have contributed in saving many people from heart attacks, stroke and dialysis with just this simple change."



\*USDA recommended daily allowance

# Hospital Café

June 2016



**Total Sodium Saved: 40,708,700**

(oz/ea) or 61,047 tsp of salt\*

1 tsp of salt for an adult is 1 tsp

## About Deaconess Hospital Café

Deaconess's 1,433 employees have a newly renovated café with a colorful salad bar, hot line and sandwich bar now offering in-house roasted meats. Serving approximately 650 café meals daily, the dining service employees also find time to prepare two homemade soups every day for the café service. Fresh fruit, raw vegetables and wonderful salads are all part of the grab-and-go section available for employees with demanding schedules.

## Sustainability

Now 10 lower sodium products are consistently being used. The combination of physician support, customer satisfaction, and enthusiasm from dietary staff, along with associated cost savings, makes this a winning strategy worth sustaining. The sodium reduction realized by Deaconess Hospital using product replacement, modified recipes, and flavor enhancement, led to a savings of 40,708,700 milligrams of sodium. In other words, a savings of 357 salt rounds (26-ounce) or 61,047 teaspoons of salt.



Janet Strohl - Lead Cook

*“Now I am more aware of how much sodium is in different foods and I look for other ways to decrease salt while still making great food”*

When Deaconess Hospital Lead Cook, Janet Strohl, learned how much sodium was in deli meats she decided to roast turkey and beef top round in house, using carrots, onions, and herbs to add flavor. Janet's

roasted turkey has 88% less sodium than the deli brand and it costs \$2 less per pound. Skillful time management has kept labor costs the same despite these changes.

# Spokane Regional Health District's Role

Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD) worked with DOH and two other local health jurisdictions to implement a three-year Sodium Reduction in Communities grant (2014-2016) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). SRHD used the following methods to help partners make changes.

- Encourage organizations to follow Washington Department of *Health's Healthy Nutrition Guidelines* (or similar guidelines).
- Assist partners in identifying key recipes and strategies to reduce sodium by at least 25 percent.
- Work with food vendors to increase the availability and accessibility of lower sodium products.
- Help with signage and placement of low sodium foods to increase visibility and customer awareness while maintaining or increasing sales of these items.
- Increase food service directors and cooks' knowledge of hidden sources of sodium and offer culinary training to increase flavor enhancement skills.



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