

GONZAGA UNIVERSITY'S ZAG DINING

Reduces Sodium and Costs

While Making Food
More Delicious Than Ever



"The chefs take pride in recipes they help develop.

The more pride they have, the greater their job

satisfaction and interest in doing high-quality work."

~ Certified Executive Chef Morisette



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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.

About Gonzaga University

Gonzaga University's commitment to employee and student health made it an ideal partner for SRHD's Sodium Reduction in Communities program. With approximately 5,400 students and faculty consuming 27,000 meals weekly at Zag Dining café, operated by Sodexo, this program provided a great opportunity to provide heart-healthy options for employees and students.

What Worked and Why

Spokane Regional Health District worked with Certified Executive Chef Thomas Morrisette and his culinary team

Reduced Sodium

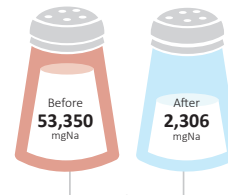
Gonzaga University

2014 - 2015



Diced Tomatoes

96%

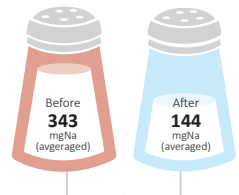


502 cases



Soups

60%



9,568 portions



Total Milligrams of Sodium

Equivalent to 606 containers (26 oz)

*USDA recommended daily allowance

to understand where sodium hides in food and how to make salt-free spice blends as part of the program.

Says Chef Morrisette, "The project increased my enthusiasm and opened the door for developing new recipes for lower-sodium bases and vegetable soups. It opened up a whole line of products."

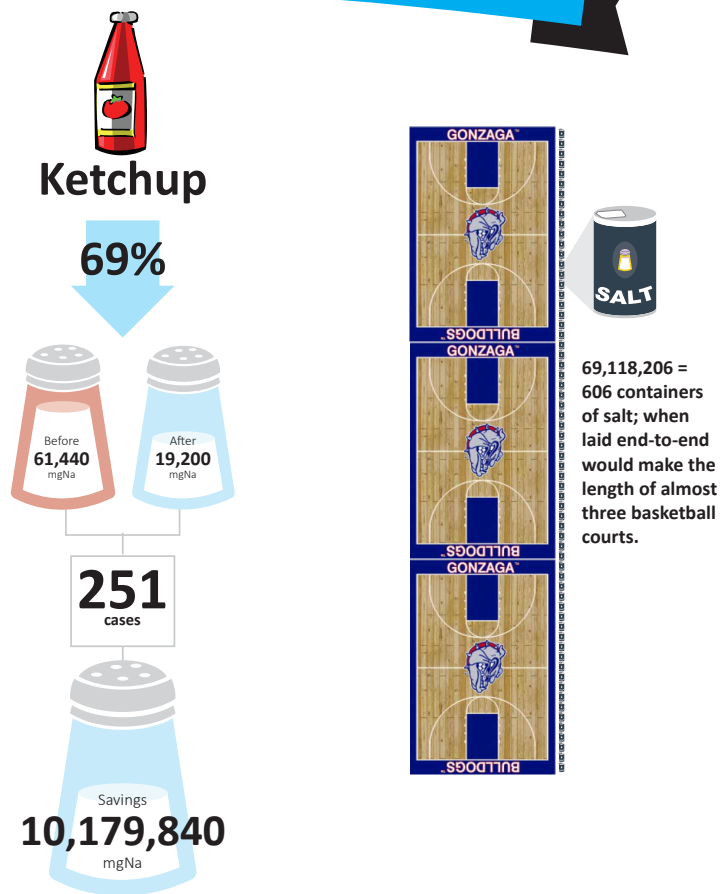
Being a part of sodium reduction efforts also sparked Sodexo staff's culinary creativity to develop a 100% scratch, low-sodium, gluten-free vegetarian soup base. The soup base is made as part of the recipe, which allows them to use it at its peak of freshness and avoid the time and hassle to cool and store it. They are motivated by successes like incorporating the low-sodium, gluten-free vegetarian soup base into 18 of the 28 soups served, lowering sodium by an average 60 percent.

Fruit-infused waters are now offered at meals, and scratch cooking menu options were expanded beyond the

in 3 Products

University Zag Dining

2016



Amount Saved: 69,118,206

(103,626 tsp of salt*)

*1 tsp of salt for an adult is 1 tsp

soup base. Chef Morrisette worked with his executive chefs to use no-added-salt diced tomatoes to develop a red sauce that is now used in all their tomato-based recipes including marinara and pizza sauce. Using this

type of canned diced tomatoes in the sauce, as well as in salsas, reduced the sodium in the tomatoes from 360 mg to 15 mg per serving, removing 96 percent of sodium in these foods.

To promote these new recipes, Zag Dining staff used descriptive names for the new soups and entrees, leading to increased acceptance. There were also letter symbols to let students know what was in their meals. Zag Dining staff are committed to making food look as good as it tastes and promote these items through digital food pictures and savory descriptions.

Sustainability

New cooks start out at the vegetarian station and are expected to master soups. With this experience, they become very skilled in creating flavors without depending on salt. As these cooks move into new positions, they take these skills to other food stations and apply them to those recipes as well.

Vegetarian cooks inspire other chefs to try new things. The whole scratch cooking process is now self-sustaining.

Chef Morrisette shared, “The chefs take pride in recipes they help develop. The more pride they have, the greater their job satisfaction and interest in doing high-quality work.”

Chef Thomas orders a large enough volume of no-added-salt diced tomatoes and lower sodium ketchup to guarantee product availability through Sodexo. This also opened the door for other Sodexo food service operations to purchase these products. Three neighboring colleges and one local hospital are now using the same tomato products.

By making soup bases from scratch and using no-added-salt diced tomatoes and lower sodium ketchup, Zag Dining has saved 69,118,206 milligrams of sodium. In common measurements this is 606 rounds (26 ounce) of salt, or 103,626 teaspoons since the beginning of the project in 2014.

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~ Certified Executive Chef Morrisette

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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