

PETE'S PIZZA

Preserving Flavor Persuades

Pizza Owner to Reduce Sodium



"I was always skeptical about the possibility of reducing sodium in this industry. I now realize it is possible even with pizza and calzones."

~ Owner, Gina Duncan



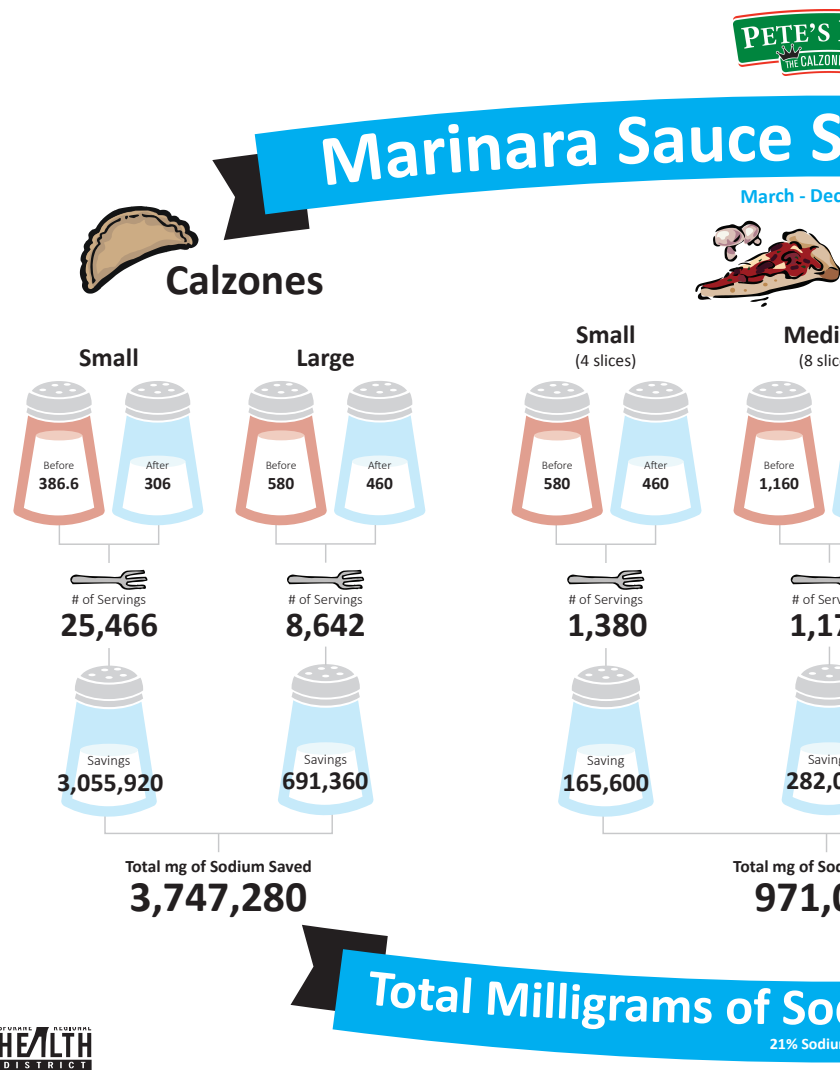
Owner, Gina Duncan with sister Liz Axel

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 towards sodium reduction. Food served at these locations often contain high amounts of sodium before they reach the plate. This can lead to eating more than 1000 milligrams of sodium above the recommended amount.

Lower sodium options are available but are often overlooked for fear of losing customers. 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 the diet may be one of the ways to help to lower customers' blood pressure and possible risk for heart disease and stroke.



“We did a taste test with regular customers and asked them what they thought about two different pieces of pizza... they did not notice a difference”



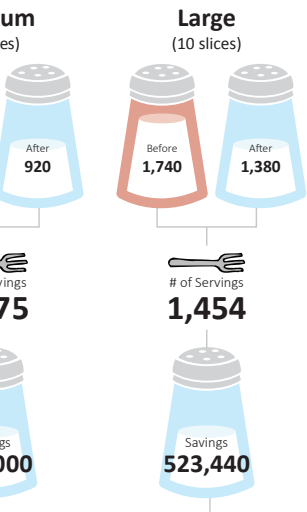
Owner, Gina Duncan



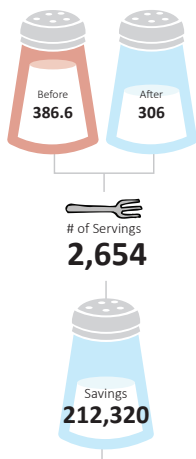
Sodium Reduction

September 2015

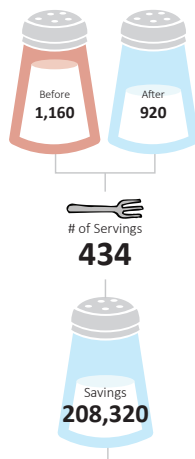
Pizzas



Starters



Sandwiches



Sodium Saved: 5,138,960
Total mg of Sodium Saved: 420,640

Sodium Saved: 5,138,960

Sodium Reduction

A teaspoon of salt for an adult is 1 tsp

What Worked and Why

Gina Duncan, owner of Pete's Pizza restaurants, was motivated to lower sodium after conversations with Spokane Regional Health District's chef consultant, Duane Sunwold. Chef Duane showed Gina where the hidden sources of sodium were in pizza and helped her develop a new pizza sauce. As an independent restaurant owner, Gina is attentive to her day-to-day revenues and values her patron's opinions and feedback.

Gina explained, "Chef Duane helped with the recipe change, it was very beneficial being shown how to work with flavors. We did a taste test with regular customers and asked them what they thought about two different pieces of pizza (one with original sauce and one that was lower sodium). They did not notice a difference and when we explained what we did, they said we should continue doing the lower sodium sauce."

Gina continued, "I was always skeptical about the possibility of reducing sodium in this industry. I now realize it is possible even with pizza and calzones." Once Gina realized that her customers enjoyed the new sauce, it encouraged her to seek other ways to reduce sodium on her menu. According to Gina, "The project opened the door to try other ideas, now we are using fresh broccoli and fresh spinach instead of frozen vegetables."

About Pete's Pizza

Pete's Pizza is a locally owned, independent pizza and calzone restaurant, operating in Spokane since 1972. Owner Gina Duncan was motivated to join the Spokane Regional Health District's Sodium Reduction in Communities Program because of her personal commitment to sodium reduction for her family. With two locations, one close to Spokane Falls Community College and the other less than one mile from Gonzaga University, Pete's Pizza provides another resource for lower sodium foods for employees and students.

Sustainability

As demonstrated over the last two years, Gina is resolved to continue these changes and is looking for additional lower sodium products. With each new ingredient, Gina plans to taste test them with her customers to ensure that they are acceptable. Over the course of this project, in serving lower sodium pizza sauce, Gina and her staff were able to realize a sodium reduction of 5,138,960 milligrams. In common measurements this is 45 salt rounds (26 ounces each) or 7,695 teaspoons of salt.

In closing, Gina said, "A little change goes a long way; this is bigger than ourselves. Americans need to eat less salt to help prevent heart disease and strokes and it makes me feel good to be helping my community."



Spokane Regional Health District's Role

The Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD) worked with the Washington State Department of Health (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.



Spokane Regional Health District – Sodium Reduction
1101 W. College Ave., #200, Spokane, WA 99201
TEL 509.324.1531 | TDD 509.324.1464 | srhd.org

This work was supported by the Sodium Reduction in Communities Program funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Cooperative Agreement Number DP004928. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Department of Health and Human Services. Photo on cover: Steven Lilley.

