

Are you salt deficient?



American doctor **David Brownstein** uses unrefined sea salt in his clinical practice to correct many problems caused by refined or low-salt salt diets and argues that the former is essential for full health, while the latter should be avoided at all costs

Above: Heaps of freshly raked sea salt in salt fields ready to be harvested, Samut Songkram Province, Thailand.

Salt is bad for you, right? Salt causes hypertension, doesn't it? We would all be healthier if salt was eliminated from our diet, correct?

Well, the surprising answer to all these questions is an emphatic: 'No'. There are many myths and untruths about salt, which I want to try to dispel here.

The Food and Drug Administration thinks salt is a harmful substance. In fact they are making waves about regulating salt because they feel it is such a dangerous substance. However, the FDA is not considering the difference between refined and unrefined salt; in typical FDA fashion, they have lumped all salt products together. In the UK, CASH – Consensus Action on Salt and Health – takes a very similar position and dismisses any difference in effects between various types of salt.

I will demonstrate that we need to avoid refined salt because it is a toxic, devitalized substance that has no value in our diet. However, we need to ingest unrefined salt as part of a holistic treatment regimen.

Like many doctors, I was taught in medical school that salt was a bad substance to ingest. My professors beat it into me that Americans were eating too much salt, which caused the epidemic of hypertension. Furthermore, I was taught that salt use was responsible for swelling, exacerbating Meniere's disease, as well as a host of other negative effects on the body.

After medical school I routinely told my patients to avoid all salt. Many patients did try to eliminate salt from their diet. And the result? Did their blood pressure lower? Were they healthier?

Unfortunately, the answer to all of these questions is the same: 'no'. Most patients had a difficult time staying on a low-salt diet because of how bland the food tasted. Furthermore, I saw little clinical benefit from a low-salt diet.

Mineral deficiency

When I began practising holistic medicine I started to look at the mineral levels of my patients – and was shocked at what I found. Nearly every patient had multiple mineral, as well as vitamin, deficiencies. In fact, those with chronic illness were often more deficient than those without.

Minerals are necessary for life itself. Our bodies cannot function optimally without an adequate supply of them: magnesium, potassium, calcium, sodium and chloride are some of the important minerals our bodies need. Without them we cannot build strong bones and muscles nor run an optimally functioning immune system. What, you might ask, does this have to do with salt?

In my search for safe and effective, natural remedies, I read an article about unrefined salt. I was intrigued. I did not know that unrefined salt contains over 80 essential minerals. I also did not know that unrefined salt helps to raise the pH (alkalinize) of the body (more on this later). Before using any type of salt in my practice, I researched the subject and was surprised to find there are huge differences in various types of salt.

When I started to use unrefined salt clinically I saw many positive health benefits. Many patients with high blood pressure actually lowered their blood pressure. Furthermore, I found unrefined salt improved the immune system and other body functions – I will explain why later. However, first one has to understand the difference between various types of salt.

Unrefined versus refined salt

As previously mentioned, the media, Big Pharma, the AMA, BMA and almost every other conventional medical organization will tell you is that salt bad for you and that you would be healthier if you avoided it. However, these organizations fail to appreciate the important differences between refined and unrefined salt: all salt is not created equal. There are fundamental differences between various salt brands.

Refined salt – toxic, devitalized

We are all familiar with refined salt – nearly every house has some. Refined salt has been harvested mechanically from various salt mines as brine, essen-