Is high salt intake the cause of obesity?

There’s been a lot of talk lately about limiting salt intake to improve your health, but the conversation isn’t new. Researchers have suggested that there may be a DIRECT link between salt intake and obesity. Is this UK-wide study providing us with new information or does it just reiterate what has previously been stated?

Experts have known since the first studies were published in the 1940s that significantly reducing sodium in the diet could lower blood pressure.

However, in the first study of its kind, a direct link between salt intake and obesity may have been identified independent of total energy intake or sugar sweetened beverage consumption (SSB).

The data, obtained from a total of 458 children and 785 adults as part of the UK National Diet and Nutrition Survey’s was used to investigate the association between salt intake and BMI, waist circumference and body fat mass – independent of total energy intake and sugar-sweetened beverage consumption.

Current UK guidelines suggest that adults should limit their salt intake to no more than 6g a day, with lower rates recommended for children depending on their age. The latest statistics show that adults are eating an average of 8.1g a day.

It is important to take into consideration that this is a small cross-sectional study and that consuming excessive amounts of salt has been proven to be bad for your health.

Awareness is an important strategy – Clear labelling to help inform consumers so they are able to make informed decisions is essential – checking nutritional information on packs to make sure we are making the healthiest choice is important to help limit the amount of salt we are eating.

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