Attitudes Toward Sodium - US - February 2013

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"Despite consumers' interest in eating healthier, they also want food that tastes good. While government, food manufacturers and restaurants try to provide healthier options to Americans, these organizations are up against several challenges, especially regarding how to market low/no/reduced sodium items."

– Emily Krol, Health and Wellness Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- Consumers believe they should be responsible for choosing food and drink, but many recent rulings have impacted availability of certain products. What is the impact of government regulation on consumer choices?
- Consumers want food that tastes good, but know that high-sodium contents are unhealthy. How can restaurants and packaged foods companies reduce sodium content without alienating people who want great-tasting food?
- The jury is still out regarding how bad sodium really is, especially for those who do not suffer from hypertension or high blood pressure. How will this affect consumer perceptions of low-sodium products?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) about 90% of Americans over the age of two consume too much sodium, which increases the risk for high blood pressure. High blood pressure increases the risk for heart disease and stroke.

Therefore, limiting sodium in one's diet is becoming increasingly important, not only to stay healthy and disease free, but also to avoid unnecessary weight gain.

Most sodium consumption comes from processed foods and restaurant fare. Manufacturers and restaurant owners have an opportunity to create lower-sodium products that will be healthier for customers. Additionally, there is opportunity for alternatives to traditional table salt in cooking.

The purpose of this report is to look at how demographic shifts affect demand for reduced-sodium products. The report will also explore how and why consumers limit sodium in their diet, and offer solutions based on these reasons. Consumer opinions regarding who should be responsible for imposing sodium restrictions are also included.

Marketing low/no/reduced-sodium products presents a challenge to marketers in that sometimes consumers are turned off by such claims due to a taste consideration. Therefore, current marketing strategies are explored and recommendations offered for how to continue to market these products.

DID YOU KNOW?

This report is part of a series of reports, produced to provide you with a more holistic view of this market

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Table of Contents

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