Salt of the Earth

Salt is salt...or is it?

August 31, 2009 By Kate Ferguson

When you think of salt, do you immediately think of tiny, white crystals in a shaker? Probably so. But there's a world of difference between refined table salt, which is stripped of its trace minerals by chemical processes, and unrefined sea salt, which retains more than 80 essential minerals required to maintain a normal blood pressure.

The effect of low-salt diets on blood pressure continues to confuse the public—and for good reason. Research using various scientific methods has yielded either totally opposite results or insufficient evidence to definitively conclude how sodium intake affects health.

Confirming the confusion, noted holistic medicine practitioner David Brownstein, MD, indicates that he's unaware of any studies with unrefined salt. (Brownstein is the author of nine books, including *Salt Your Way to Health*.)

Brownstein suggests that the real culprits in elevated blood pressure (hypertension) are the low mineral levels researchers now associate with hypertension. "Refined salt, with its lack of minerals, causes an imbalance between sodium and other minerals in the body, including magnesium, potassium and calcium," Brownstein says. "This [is what] causes blood pressure problems."

Also recognized as part of that problem is the high consumption of processed foods, which accounts for almost 77 percent of the refined sodium in the American diet. Unrefined sea salt, however, in addition to supplying 80 minerals for the body, helps normalize pH balance, Brownstein says.

"Acid pH is associated with elevated blood pressure and other chronic illnesses," Brownstein explains. "A normal pH is helpful for mineral absorption as well as lowering blood pressure."

The issue, he says, is not salt quantity but salt quality.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/salt-blood-pressure-17186-3282