

# Soy sauce, potato chips, pickles: How too much salt could lead to stomach cancer

Experts warn that high-salt foods are linked to an increased risk of stomach cancer, a major health concern in India.



*Salt can enhance the formation of carcinogens in preserved and processed foods.*

## **In Short**

- Stomach cancer is the second-most common cancer among men in Asia
- Salt can enhance the formation of carcinogens in processed foods
- Pickled foods, potato chips, soy sauce and more can increase stomach cancer risk

High-salt foods have been linked to an increased risk of stomach cancer, experts warn. Stomach cancer, also known as gastric cancer, remains a major health concern worldwide, with dietary habits playing a significant role in its development.

In India, stomach cancer is one of the most common cancers in the southern region. It has become the second-most common cancer among men and the third-most common cancer among women in Asia.

[According to a study](#), stomach cancer is decreasing but its burden is high in India. Doctors have advised that excess salt in the diet has been found to damage the stomach lining, making it more vulnerable to infections like *Helicobacter pylori*.

This bacterium is strongly associated with stomach cancer, and the combination of salt and infections can amplify the risk.

Besides this, salt can enhance [the formation of carcinogens](#) in preserved and processed foods. Most foods such as soy sauce, potato chips, and processed meats, have been linked to an increased risk of stomach cancer, experts warn.

Dr. Neeraj Dhingra, Consultant in Radiation and Clinical Oncology at Ruby Hall Clinic, Pune, said that high salt intake may damage the stomach lining and increase the growth of *Helicobacter pylori*.



*Excess salt in the diet has been found to damage the stomach lining, making it more vulnerable to infections like *Helicobacter pylori*.*

"Reducing salt intake, along with a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, can help lower the risk," said Dr Dhingra.

## **HIGH-SALT FOODS TO WATCH OUT FOR**

Certain foods are particularly high in salt and are associated with a higher risk of gastric cancer:

- **Processed meats:** Items like bacon, sausages, and salami are often cured with large amounts of salt.

- **Pickled Foods:** Pickles and fermented vegetables are preserved in brine, making them high in sodium.
- **Snack Foods:** Potato chips, pretzels, and salted nuts are loaded with salt to enhance flavour.
- **Canned and Packaged Foods:** Instant noodles, soups, and ready-to-eat meals often rely on salt for preservation.
- **Soy Sauce and Condiments:** These are typically [high in sodium and used in excess](#) in many dishes.

Dr. Bhavesh Patel, Consultant Gastroenterologist at Bhailal Amin General Hospital, explained that excessive salt consumption can increase the risk of stomach cancer by 1.5 to 2 times.

"Salt not only damages the stomach lining but also boosts the formation of carcinogens in preserved foods," he told IndiaToday.in.

## **HOW TO PREVENT STOMACH CANCER**

To lower the risk, experts recommend reducing salt intake:

- **Cook Fresh:** Prepare meals at home using fresh ingredients.
- **Flavour Naturally:** Use herbs, spices, or lemon juice instead of salt.
- **Check Labels:** Opt for low-sodium packaged foods when possible.

### **News Source:**

<https://www.indiatoday.in/health/story/soy-sauce-potato-chips-pickles-how-too-much-salt-could-lead-to-stomach-cancer-2640401-2024-11-26>