

NO SALT FOODS CAN BE TASTY -- AND GOOD FOR YOU

A recent article in USA Today (Feb. 12, 2004) opens by stating that "Americans should cut back -- way back -- on salt..." and adds, "If Americans cut back on salt, there would be fewer cases of high blood pressure..." Yet, despite the acknowledged health danger of too much salt in our diets, the article concludes by stating that a recommended reduction in salt intake of 50% is unrealistic according to the Grocery Manufacturers of America.

The biggest rap on low-salt diets is that, without salt, food just isn't tasty enough to suit most palates. The Grocery Manufacturers go on to say that while most companies are working on reducing the sodium in their foods, it is not feasible to remove all sodium from foods because salt makes food taste better.

To this, cookbook author Donald Gazzaniga retorts with a loud and clear "hogwash!"

"It is a fallacy to believe that foods must have large amounts of salt in them in order to taste good," he continues. "I have developed more than 700 no-salt recipes, tested each and every one of them, and not only are they tasty -- they're healthy."

Gazzaniga produced his no-salt recipes as a matter of life or death -- his. Diagnosed with an enlarged heart and congestive heart failure in 1997, he was told he needed a heart transplant and without one he had only six months to a year to live. When he asked his doctor what he could do he was told one of the things that might help was to get his sodium intake down from the daily American average of about 8,000 to 12,000 milligrams to around 1500. "I decided to do it one better and get my intake down to 500 mg. a day or even less," Gazzaniga says. An amateur chef, he tested each and every one of his no-salt recipes and made them as delicious as possible while keeping their sodium level extremely low. Salt was not a part of any of his recipes. He was a man on a mission because the life he was trying to save was his own.

Gazzaniga's recipes were so successful that St. Martin's Press has put them in two books -- "The No-Salt Lowest-Sodium Cookbook" and "The No-Salt Lowest Sodium Baking Book." A third book is scheduled for this year. Gazzaniga has also put a selective number of recipes on his website, www.megaheart.com.

Combined with medicine prescribed by his cardiologist, exercise, and the success of his no-salt lifestyle, Gazzaniga not only avoided a heart transplant but he has been able to return to a near normal life. And even more exciting is the fact that he has been able to help other people who are suffering with diseases that call for a radical reduction in their salt intake.

Gazzaniga says, "No salt foods can be tasty and healthy for you. I'm happy to say I'm living proof of it."

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