



# War, Unemployment, Deficits and ... Salt? New York Mayor Wants Serving Reductions

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Health care, unemployment, terrorism, war, deficits and ... salt?

That appears the latest controversy on the plate of at least one prominent politician.

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg wants the Health Department to add salt to a crackdown list of foods that includes a ban on trans fats and a requirement for fast food restaurants to display nutrition labels.

Now Bloomberg wants to go nationwide, urging a ruling to limit the salt in prepared foods sold in the city by 25 percent by 2014.

Britain introduced a stealth volunteer salt reduction program 10 years ago, which has taken root and resulted in salt consumption to .30 ounces from .33 ounces per person per day. British salt reduction supporters say the crackdown has reduced by 6,000 the number of deaths per year in that country.

One area in Britain where salt was cut most was in bread. But a New York Post editorial found it odd that a mayor who salts his Saltine crackers and eats burnt-bacon-and-peanut-butter sandwiches would call for a sodium crackdown.

Nutritionists say excessive dietary salt can cause increased blood pressure, which leads to heart disease, the No. 1 killer in America.

Nutritionist Keri Glassman said Americans consume about double the sodium they should, and the New York plan would not prohibit people from using a salt shaker.

"They're just trying to control the amount of salt that we get in our diet that we don't even know we're getting that we find in packaged processed foods. Let us take control, if you want to add some then that's your choice, but at least have the choice," she said.

But Justin Wilson, a senior research analyst with Consumer Freedom, said the "one-size-fits-all policy" applies to only a small part of the population, and not even everyone who needs it since "only 30 percent of people with high blood pressure need to reduce their salt intake."

"I think Mayor Bloomberg fancies himself to be a big brother," Wilson told Fox News. "He's slowly but surely regulating New Yorkers' diet to be just plain old bland. And I think it's just inappropriate for the government to mandate how much salt that we can eat, especially when you consider not everyone needs to have a low-salt diet."

Actress Suzanne Somers, a cancer survivor who's become an expert on alternative health care remedies, said sea salt actually lowers blood pressure rather than raising it. A simple switch from table salt to sea salt could make the difference in people's health as well as tamping down the ire of the city's chefs.

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