Dietary salt reduction: Preventing cardiovascular disease

In the WHO South-East Asia Region, cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) were responsible for an estimated 3.8 million deaths in 2015. Hypertension is a major risk for CVDs.

High consumption of dietary salt:
- One of the top dietary risk factors for disease burden and 10th overall risk factor globally
- Increases systolic and diastolic blood pressure

WHO recommends a reduction to <5 g/day salt (<2000 mg/day sodium) in adults to reduce blood pressure and risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke and coronary heart disease in adults

Sources of dietary salt in the see region:
- discretionary salt added to food (70–90%)
- processed pre-packaged food (10–30%)

Interventions to reduce dietary salt intake
- Behaviour change communication to reduce salt consumption such as adding salt to cooked foods
- Institutional nutrition standards
- Industry reformulation of food products
- Front-of-pack labels for packaged food
- Reduction of salt content in foods prepared outside the home (restaurant and street food)