

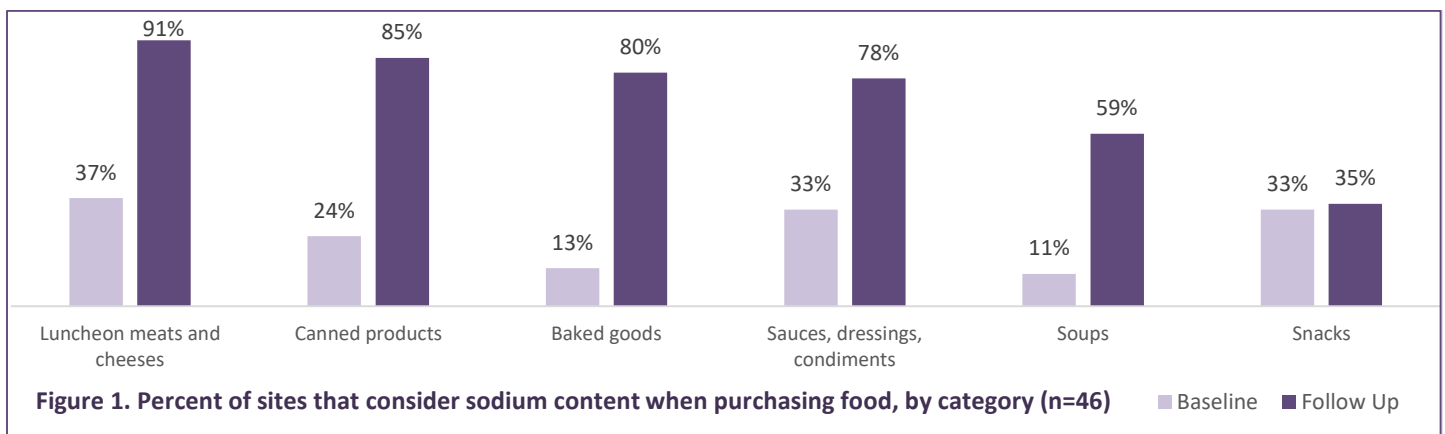


Problem: Americans consume about 50% more sodium than the recommended daily limit. Consuming too much sodium increases the risk of high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, and chronic kidney disease. In New York State (NYS), over 7.2 million adults report watching or reducing their sodium intake. Because an estimated 71% of sodium intake comes from sodium added during food manufacturing and preparation of restaurant foods, action to reduce consumption must focus on changing the sodium content of the food supply. [Source: NYS Information for Action Report #2021-15, released 8/4/21]

Intervention: In 2016, the NYS Department of Health (DOH) received funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to reduce sodium consumption by increasing the availability, accessibility, and selection of lower-sodium foods. DOH partnered with three local contractors to recruit and assess early childhood education centers in Erie, Niagara, Onondaga, and Rockland counties. Contractors provided early childhood education centers with individualized training and technical assistance on nutrition standards, food purchasing and preparation, and nutrition promotion. They also worked with DOH to measure the impact of their strategies and activities.

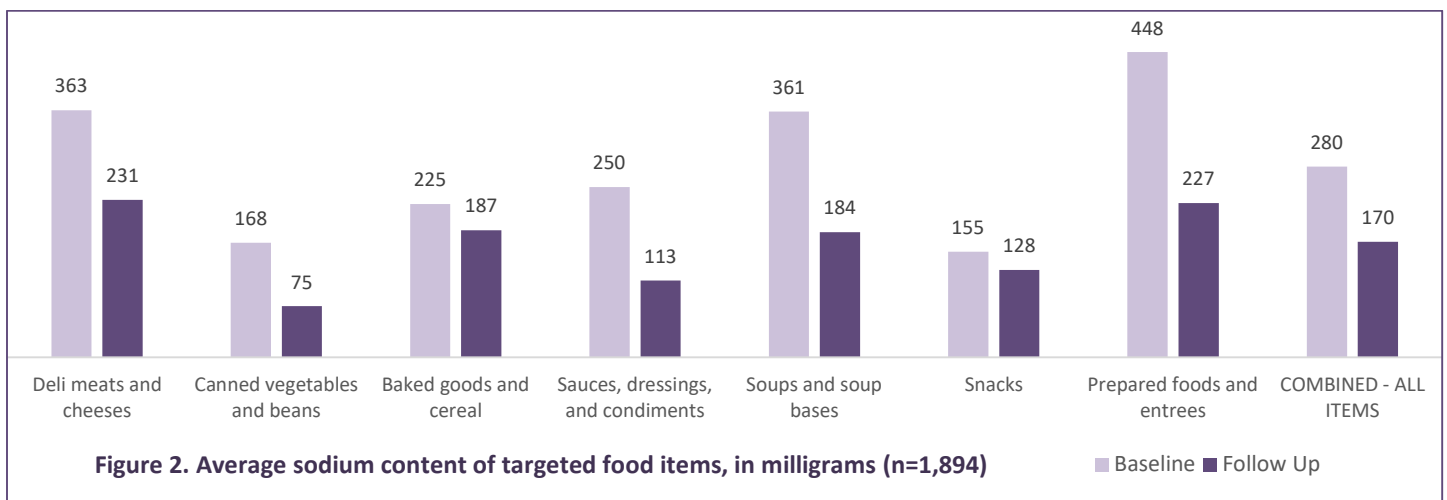
Impact: During the funded period, all 53 participating early childhood education centers achieved at least one desired outcome: 39 implemented nutrition standards, 39 modified menus, 48 replaced products, and 49 changed nutrition environments. A total of 4,701 children benefited from these improvements.

Local contractors used the *Sodium Practices Assessment Tool 2.0* to assess policies and practices at 46 of 53 participating sites. Results demonstrate significant improvements. The percent of early childhood education centers with nutrition standards specifying sodium milligram limits increased from 9% to 87%, the percent sending sodium information home to families increased from 7% to 89%, and the percent considering sodium content when purchasing food increased in all targeted categories (See **Figure 1**, below).





Impact: Local contractors used the *Sodium Modification List* to track changes in the sodium content of foods served. Results document reductions in 820 of 1894 targeted food items. These reductions were achieved through product replacements (62%), menu changes (36%), and recipe modifications (2%). The average sodium content of targeted food items was reduced by 36% for deli meats and cheeses; by 55% for canned vegetables and beans; by 17% for baked goods and cereals; by 55% for sauces, dressings, and condiments; by 49% for soups and soup bases; by 17% for snacks; and by 49% for prepared foods and entrées. Additional information is provided below in **Figure 2**.



Conclusion: NYS’s Sodium Reduction in Communities program successfully changed policies and practices at participating early childhood education centers. These changes led to measurable reductions in the sodium content of targeted food items. Site-level changes like these will be more effective if food industry partners produce lower-sodium products, in accordance with FDA’s Final Sodium Reduction Guidance (released 10/2021). For more information, visit https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/sodium_reduction.