Webinar on recent ACC/AHA Cholesterol, Hypertension, and Sodium Guidelines:

Implications for Cardiovascular Health: **Sodium**

**Background:** New lifestyle guidelines were recently released in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology. *The 2013 AHA/ACC Guideline on Lifestyle Management to Reduce Cardiovascular Risk: A report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Task Force on Practice Guidelines* provides recommendations for heart-healthy lifestyle choices based. The guidelines focus on two important lifestyle choices—diet and physical activity— both of which can have a big impact on cardiovascular health, this document focuses on the sodium guideline.

Excess sodium consumption is a significant health problem that contributes to hypertension, a leading risk factor for heart disease and stroke, both of which are leading causes of death in the United States. Currently, the average American consumes more than 3,400 milligrams (mg) of sodium a day and nearly two-thirds of U.S. adults have high or elevated blood pressure.

**CDC follows *The Dietary Guidelines for Americans[[1]](#footnote-1)* policy recommendations**.

* The new AHA/ACC cardiovascular prevention guidelines[[2]](#footnote-2) recommend to reduce sodium intake to <2,400 mg/day. This recommendation differs from *The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (DGAs) and the Institute of Medicine Dietary Reference Intakes. These publications recommend 2,300 mg/day as the upper limit of intake for adults.
* The current DGA’s also recommends that people 51 and older and those of any age who are African Americans or who have high blood pressure, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease should further reduce sodium intake to 1,500 mg/d.
* The DGAs are currently being reassessed, this happens every 5 years. The 2015 DGAs are expected in early 2015.

The AHA/ACC Guidelines for Sodium Intake are as follows:

* For people who need/advised to lower their blood pressure, the guidelines recommend a gradual step-down approach that caps daily sodium intake at no more than 2,400 mg. However, the guidelines advise that 1,500 mg a day of sodium is the level with the greatest effect on blood pressure.
* “Reducing sodium intake by at least 1,000 mg a day from the US average will lower blood pressure, even if the desired sodium intake is not yet achieved.”[[3]](#footnote-3)
* The AHA/ACC Work Group states that “although the impact on behavior of a difference between intakes of 2,400 mg versus 2,300 mg of sodium per day would be minimal, these recommendations are based on the strongest clinical trial evidence available: the achieved level of 2,400 mg/day from the DASH-Sodium trial (estimated from average urinary sodium excretion).”2

**Key takeaway**: The Dietary Guidelines for Americans1 and the AHA/ACC2 both advise people to lower sodium intake and to follow an overall heart-healthy diet, such as the DASH dietary pattern[[4]](#footnote-4), that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, while including low-fat dairy products, poultry, fish and nuts, and limiting red meat, sweets and sugar-sweetened beverages to reduce blood pressure.

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for

Americans, 2010. 7th ed. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2010. Available at: <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2010/DietaryGuidelines2010.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Eckel, Robert H., et al. "2013 AHA/ACC Guideline on Lifestyle Management to Reduce Cardiovascular RiskA Report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Task Force on Practice Guidelines." Journal of the American College of Cardiology (2013). Available at: [http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/early/2013/11/11/01.cir.0000437740.48606.d1.full.pdf+html](http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/early/2013/11/11/01.cir.0000437740.48606.d1.full.pdf%2Bhtml) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. American Heart Association. <http://newsroom.heart.org/news/american-heart-associationamerican-college-of-cardiology-joint-healthy-living-clinical-practice-guideline> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. DASH Eating Plan. Available at: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/dash/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)