

“There are some people who could hear you speak a thousand words and still not understand you. There are others who will understand --- without you even speaking a word.”

Yasmin Mogahed

This is a fantastic quote and I can't believe I haven't come across it before. There are many people in our lives who fit into the first sentence. Those who fit sentence two are quite rare and they are our true friends. They are people with whom the silence between us is actually comfortable. In difficult times, like those we've been experiencing over the last year or so, we find out who our true friends are. They are the ones who listen when you need to talk and the ones who talk when you need to listen. They are the ones who have your back no matter what. It doesn't matter how long you go without talking to a true friend because you always pick up right where you left off. Stop what you're doing for just a moment and think about who those people are in YOUR life. Then let them know how much you appreciate them.

Yours in health,

Susan Monaco, Certified Health Coach
Health and Wellness by Design
www.healthnwellnessbydesign.com
susan@healthnwellnessbydesign.com



Hello Himalayan Sea Salt

Isn't salt bad for you? This is a bit of a loaded question because some salt is bad for you and certainly, too much salt is also bad for you. However, there is one salt better for you than the others and that's what I'm writing about this month. Hopefully, many of you are familiar with Pink Himalayan Sea Salt ("HSS"). If not, (and even if you are) please continue reading.

All HSS comes from the Jhelum District in the Punjab region of Pakistan. Its history is pretty fascinating. The Himalayas are located where there used to be an ancient ocean. About 300 million years ago, that ocean dried up and left behind, a huge salt deposit. The largest salt mine in the area is the Khewra Salt Mine, which sits at the foot of the Himalayas. What makes this area so special is that it's protected from smog and other chemical pollutants by the Himalayan mountain range. For this reason, it's thought to be the purest salt on the planet. HSS is actually sea salt mined like rock salt. Experts estimate that it contains anywhere from 80 to 84 different trace minerals, including potassium, zinc, calcium and magnesium. HSS doesn't go through the extensive chemical processing of regular salt. It's simply rinsed with water and dried. Regular salt contains food additives, which can include concentrated bleach, anti-caking agents and food additives. Who wants to put those things into your body?

Does Pink Himalayan Salt Have Iodine?

Yes and it's there naturally, not added artificially! This is great news because it's an essential mineral we can only get from food or supplements. Iodine is important because it's the main source of nourishment for the thyroid. Iodine is also important for women's breast and uterine health. Studies have shown that many women with breast cancer suffer from low iodine levels and thyroid dysfunction. The thyroid is the "master hormone processor" in the body. It sends signals that basically tell all other hormones where to go and what to do. Balanced hormones are important for everyone and just the right amount of iodine is needed in order for your hormones to do an effective job for you.

Why Is Himalayan Salt Pink?

The color comes from iron oxide, which is found naturally in the salt deposits. While some people believe the darker color means it's healthier, it simply means it contains more iron. The one downside is this can make it taste more bitter.

What are the Benefits?

As I mentioned above, HSS contains trace minerals, which are minerals our body needs, just in smaller quantities. These include iodine, iron, copper, selenium, and zinc. Even though we typically need less than 100 milligrams of any one of them daily, not getting enough can make us feel grumpy, gain weight and even cause cardiovascular and digestive issues. Trace minerals help cleanse the body, strengthen the circulatory system, balance hormones, help maintain reproductive health, and assist with many beneficial biochemical reactions for our body and brain. Here are some of its benefits:

- Helps prevent dehydration. The minerals in HSS are electrolytes, which are needed to regulate fluids in our body. You can mix 2 cups of purified water, ½ cup of your favorite fresh juice, ¼ teaspoon HSS and 1 tablespoon of honey to make your own sports drink without all the sugar and chemicals included in the ones you buy at the store.
- Helps improve digestion. HSS helps our intestinal tract absorb nutrients as well as balance pH levels. When pH levels are balanced, it can improve digestion as well as our immune system.
- Helps prevent infections. HSS can fight bacteria to keep infections away. Regular (but moderate) consumption promotes the immune system and helps infections heal faster. You can add it to your bath to help prevent fungal and bacterial infections.
- Helps with sleep. Low-sodium diets cause blood volume to decrease in the sympathetic nervous system, which activates adrenaline. This can interfere with a restful sleep. HSS can help because it causes your body to produce more oxytocin, which is the hormone that released into the bloodstream in response to love and to childbirth. It helps you relax and calm your body and mind. Before you go to bed, try mixing some raw honey with a bit of HSS. You can consume it just like that or add it to a cup of decaf tea. (Please be sure to read my November 2017 newsletter on tea)
- Helps support heart health. HSS helps to keep your blood pressure stable because it doesn't have as much sodium as table salt. Since it contains more minerals, you'll need less water to clear out any excess sodium in your system. That means you won't retain as much water, which takes pressure off your heart.
- Helps exfoliate skin. Regular exfoliation can help boost collagen production. I wrote about collagen last month. HSS makes a wonderful body scrub. Simply take 1 cup fine to medium-sized HSS, ¼ cup olive oil and 10 drops essential oil, wet the skin and scrub in a circular motion to remove dead skin cells.

What Else?

HSS is known to soothe aching muscles and stimulate healthy circulation. It can be used to replace regular salt in any recipe, but be sure to finely grind it. Most store-bought salt mills create much larger pieces than you'd want to use for cooking.

Another cool thing about HSS is you can buy large slabs and cook on them. They make a great surface on which to cook because they distribute heat evenly. I used one for a while years ago, but it eventually cracked into pieces and I threw it away. I wish I'd kept it. Another good reason to use it for cooking is because salt is naturally antimicrobial, so it only needs to be rinsed off or scrubbed after using it. You don't have to worry about disinfecting it. It also gives your food a slightly salty flavor, which is perfect for people who love the "salty" taste.

Many spas are now offering HSS rooms, where you can relax and chill out. Some experts believe that breathing in tiny salt particles pulls water into your airway, which thins out mucus and reduces the inflammation associated with asthma or COPD. There isn't much evidence yet to support this claim, but anytime you can relax in a quiet room for 30-45 minutes, it's a wonderful thing.

Before you go overboard, keep in mind that consuming too much of any kind of salt may cause high blood pressure, strokes or heart disease. HSS does contain less sodium than table salt, 1680 mg vs 2360 mg, a savings of about 33%. Recent research has shown that consuming HSS can reduce the risk of infection and kill harmful bacteria. One super interesting study on animals I found has led researchers to conclude it may have a positive impact on symptoms of depression. Further studies are clearly needed, but consuming salt would certainly be much healthier than popping antidepressants.

Have a wonderful month.