La Casa Day Spa
Salting Your Sugars

One of the things that puzzles many devoted, die-hard vegetarians and health-food freaks is how frequently they crave oily, buttery, sweet-laden goodies. Vegetarians often assume that because their diet is pure, it is also balanced. What we don't know, however, is that sodium is absolutely essential to biochemical balance, and that if we do not eat sufficient sodium, we will be deficient in vital minerals, a condition which will affect the health of our entire body. Many of us don't concentrate on the foods which are naturally high in sodium -- goat whey, okra, lentils, celery, turnips, raw egg, black figs, fish, spinach, cucumbers.

A deficiency in sodium will create the same kind of craving for sugar and sweets that a need for water does. Ironically, not only does drinking sufficient water cure a sugar craving, so does eating pure, unrefined salt.

Salt and water are, in fact, so intertwined in the body that we could say that they're married to one another. Not only are our bodies 85% water, this watery solution is salty. Our blood is salty, our tears are salty, our sweat is salty and our urine is salty. The very first environment that each of us experiences -- the intrauterine environment and the amniotic fluid that suspends us weightlessly in the uterus -- is salty, actually equivalent to the ocean. In this, our first salty home, the embryo grows over three billion times in weight. We are in need of salt throughout the rest of our lives just as much as we were originally in our intrauterine home.

The role of salt in sugar craving is similar to the role of water in sugar craving. Deficiency causes the craving. In the case of salt, sodium is essential for all stages of digestion. Without salt, no digestion is possible. Digestion begins in the mouth, and salt plays its first role here. Salt activates the first enzyme in the mouth, salivary amylase. Salt exposes food to the tastebuds, which is why we salt our foods "to taste."

In the stomach, salt generates hydrochloric acid. Only when there is a sufficient amount of hydrochloric acid can food be digested. Hydrochloric acid digests the glucides of cereal grains, breaks down the fibers of vegetables, and emulsifies fats and oils. If there is insufficient hydrochloric acid, the glucides are not transformed and the natural sugars in the food are not released through the process of digestion. The body then enters an internal state of a sugar deficiency, and there will be a felt craving for sweets. It is this deficiency which causes vegetarians and specifically macrobiotics, with their heavy emphasis on grains, to crave sweet desserts, even after having a balanced whole grain and vegetable meal. This sugar craving arises not from some psychological weakness, but from an actual physiological imbalance in salt intake.

Sodium deficiency interferes with many bodily processes other than digestion. Our bodies, in fact, consist of a series of three miniature oceans, salty, watery solutions that comprise the 85% fluid of our bodies. These three internal oceans require frequent replenishment of trace minerals. Each of these internal oceans surrounds and circulates through our bodies. One forms the plasma of our blood; another forms the lymphatic circulatory system; the third forms the extracellular fluid that bathes every living cell. It is this mineral replenishment which occurs through absorption in the skin that explains why bathing in the ocean is so invigorating. A few minutes in ocean water has an immediate strengthening effect of the salty, watery lymphatic system.

These three salty fluids are close in their chemical composition as well as in their physio-chemical and biological properties. They are intimately interconnected, and each bodily fluid can influence the others. Each requires trace elements which exist in both the earth's oceans and our bodily internal oceans. These trace minerals all work together to maintain balance and proper functioning of all of the body's systems.

If any of our internal oceans are short-changed of trace nutrients, the bio-electric impulses which trigger all chemical processes of the body will be hampered. All nervous impulses depend upon a difference of potential between the inside and outside of the cells. This cellular integrity is accomplished through an accumulation of potassium and magnesium inside the cell and sodium and calcium outside the cell. The leniency for variation from this balance is extremely small. If there is more than a 1% change in the necessary amounts of these trace minerals, the cell loses its ability to control its ions, and pathology on the cellular level occurs. In particular, there is a breakdown of the regeneration and growth process of the cell, an essential process as a prophylactic against cancer.

Salt deficiency is a major cause of fatigue. Sodium and chloride help stimulate the synthesis of anti-stress hormones from the adrenal glands. These hormones are necessary in that they regulate metabolism, maintaining circulation and boosting energy. Muscular weakness, muscle soreness and leg cramps are all symptoms of sodium deficiency. Furthermore, many of the4 common medications, including aspirin, cortisone, prednisone, diuretics and antacids deplete salt from the body.

Since sodium is essential to so many bodily functions, we have to ask why salt has gotten such a bad rep. We have been led to believe that salt will kill us through high-blood pressure and heart disease. In fact, although the link between salt and blood pressure has been investigated for decades, until recently there was no study that actually tracked heart attack rates on people who limited their salt intake. Now, one has been performed and the results are rather shocking. According to a study published in the medical journal, *Hypertension*, men with high blood pressure who reduced their salt intake to half the daily maximum had four times as many heart attacks as the hypertensive men who ate three times the amount of salt. Researcher Michael Alderman believes that cutting back on salt prompts the kidneys to crank out rennin, a hormone that constricts blood vessels, causing cells which line small arteries in the heart to swell; these are physiological changes which might well trigger a heart-attack. We at *La Casa* believe that sudden changes in dietary routines can be damaging; it is, at times, the body's inability to adapt to sudden changes that triggers health problems. In addition, we believe that with the proper sodium balance through natural foods, as opposed to manipulating salt intake, researchers might well see an even stronger effect than this study indicates in the reduction of hypertension and heart disease.

As for the 50 years of medical studies that have confirmed the relation between salt intake and high blood pressure: all these studies were performed on refined, white table salt. This substance can, indeed, kill you, and in more ways than through heart disease. This salt, in fact, is not even made for human consumption. Salt that is eaten accounts for only seven percent of the total salt production, the balance used by the chemical industry and manufacturing. There is no distinction in origin of the salt, nor in the manufacturing process. Most salt comes from dried-up inland seas, dead salt lakes or dead salt mines. What is created, for eating and for industry, is a chemicalized, unnatural and biologically damaging substance. It bears little relation to salt in its natural state, either the salt taken relatively recently from our oceans, or the salt in our bodies' internal oceans. In the industrial refining process, over 92 trace minerals and essential nutrients are removed. A single, devitalized, unnatural compound made of sodium and chlorine is left.

With the use of rigorous advertising, the salt industry is successful in convincing you there are actually health advantages to adding potentially toxic iodine and fluoride to salt. In addition, your table salt very often contains dangerous preservatives not required to be listed on the packaging. Calcium carbonate, magnesium carbonate, and aluminum hydroxide are often added to improve the ability of table salt to pour. Aluminum is used to make the salt slippery and prevent caking so it will shake easily from the salt shaker. Aluminum is a light alloy that deposits into your brain - a potential cause of Alzheimer's disease. Table salt also contains added sugar to enhance the taste – thus affecting your blood glucose levels.

In addition, most table salt is taken from cement-lined salt flats which draw their water from industrially polluted bays and coasts. This crude salt is unsuitable as a table food because it is filled with dirt, oily sand, concrete efflorescence and heavy metal pollution. This salt needs refining, and gets it. The refining process, too, introduces its own set of pollutants. The end result is a chemical substance which, indeed, causes heart disease as well as many other bodily dysfunctions and diseases which have not yet been linked directly to this refined salt.

When your body tries to manage too much table salt, water molecules must surround the sodium chloride to break them up into sodium and chloride ions. To accomplish this, water is taken from your cells and you have to sacrifice the perfectly structured water already stored in your cells in order to neutralize the unnatural sodium chloride. This results in dehydrated cells – and dehydrated cells die at a much faster rate than others.

Many health-food practitioners who are even minimally aware of the refining process of salt have opted for sea salt, thinking that they are giving themselves a healthy alternative. This is false reassurance, however, and any commercial brand of sea salt will have the same dangerous effects as refined salt. Although the origin of the salt may be the ocean, the salt is still harvested mechanically by bulldozers from dirt or concrete basins. The salt is processed, using many artificial processes which degrade the quality of the salt and rob it of all of its essential minerals. Too, the oceans are being used as dumping grounds for harmful toxic poisons like mercury, PCBs and dioxin. Reports of oil spills polluting the sea are becoming more frequent. With some 89% of all the sea salt producers now refining their salt, today's sea salt simply isn't as healthy as it used to be. Sea salt is heated to the point that its molecular structure is cracked. Finally, it is further adulterated by chemical additives which make it, like regular refined salt, free-flowing, bleached and iodized with inorganic iodine.

If you were to look into a microscope at sea salt, you would see it has irregular and isolated crystalline structures disconnected from the natural elements surrounding them. Thus, however many vital minerals it may still contain, they cannot be absorbed by your body unless the body expends tremendous energy to vitalize them. Your body's net gain is small compared to the great loss of energy.

We fare no better with most of the so-called "natural" products that include salt. The salt that is found in tamari, soy sauce and miso is Mexican in origin. This salt is crude salt that is shipped in bulk to Japan where most of these products are made. It is actually illegal in Japan for any individual or firm to make salt. The refining and sale of salt is a government monopoly. The entire supply of salt in Japan is imported and highly refined. This salt is then artificially re-mineralized with a few specific minerals so that it can be sold as a natural product. This salt is not a natural product. It is a pale imitation of natural.

Many vegetarians believe that they get sufficient salt from the small amount of sodium that is in vegetables and other foods. However, many vegetarians are not attentive enough to their sodium needs and don’t consume enough sodium to satisfy their body’s sodium requirements. When this happens, vegetarians will experience a craving for salty snack foods as well as for sugar.

Meat-eaters, as well as vegetarians, can suffer from sodium deficiency. Many aboriginal peoples who were meat-eaters would only eat from a fresh-kill. They would drink the blood of the animal, suck out the marrow and gnaw on the cartilage. These habits increased the ratio of minerals to protein, thus giving the people necessary sodium and protecting them against many diseases, including heart disease. Today, however, we eat aged meat that has had the blood drained from it. With the high degree of meat protein that most meat-eaters today consume, and without the balancing trace minerals, it is almost impossible for the body to regulate itself adequately. The rampant extent of heart disease in western countries may be partially attributed to this habit of ours.

The Prescription:

Our ancestors may not have known the chemistry to know the effective component was sodium, but nevertheless they understood the amazing health benefits of natural salt.

Salt was so valuable in ancient times that it was regarded as worth its weight in gold. Much of the exploration of the Far East was for the rare spice that was salt. Wars, even, have been fought to gain control of the commodity of salt.

Our forbears knew that natural crystal salt was life-giving and a powerful healing agent. Initially, man probably began eating salt by using the rock salt of the earth, the same salt licks that animals used. Rock salt has high concentrations of calcium sulfate and potassium chloride, materials that are appropriate for the meat-eating nomadic tribes.

In the warmer climates, however, concentrating and drying the brine from salt waters was a relatively simple procedure. Proximity to salt springs or to oceans became an important determinant in where people chose to live. Among these ancestors were the Celts, who revered three major symbols of life and harmony with the cosmos: wheat, which is the symbol of life; salt is the extension of fire, issued from the waters; and water, which bestows spiritual strength. Together, this trilogy gave these peoples a philosophy of life and a reverence for basic elements.

The 4 Salts of La Casa:

We at *La Casa* use all of the four salts described below. We use them for sole (salty water) that we make and drink every morning; we use them for "brine" baths; we use them on foods; we use them for our salt therapies: salt scrubs; salt sauna and salt floatation.

1) ***Celtic Salt:*** We use this for eating. When using this salt for consumption, it is important to not cook the nutrients out. Thus, we add it to food only at the end of the cooking process.

The method the ancient Celts used to collect their salt is still in practice today in the coastal region of Brittany, France. The particular ecology of this region makes it among the most pristine in the world. In 1991 the French government proclaimed this area to be a national shrine, and the Celtic practice of gathering the salt to be a national treasure. Here, farmers in the tradition of their Celtic ancestors, use only the wind and sun as mechanisms for drying the salt. Salt crystals are harvested by hand in wooden spoons. As well as trace elements, Celtic salt contains the valuable macro-nutrients of boron, lithium, iodine, phosphorous, ammonium, strontium and fluorine.

2) ***Himalayan Crystal Salt****:* We use this for eating, for sole and for our salt sauna.

A vast ocean covered the area that became the Himalayan mountain range. The salt from that ocean was preserved as large crystal formations, which now yield among the purest salt on earth. Bio-energetically "alive," this crystal salt contains the same 84 key trace minerals as our bodies, so it is easily metabolized. The hand-crushed salt is pinkish in color due to the minerals it contains. Himalayan Crystal salt has spent over 250 million years maturing under extreme tectonic pressure, far away from exposure to any impurities. The salt's unique structure also stores vibrational primal energy. All of the crystal salt's inherent minerals and trace elements are available in colloidal form - meaning they are so small your cells can readily absorb them.

The Crystal Salt from the Himalayas does not burden your body as other salts do. It is very difficult for your body to absorb too much crystal salt since there are powerful and effective feedback loops that regulate this process. Natural crystal salt always has a balancing effect and does not contribute to high blood pressure like typical table salt.

Himalayan Crystal Salt's array of elements forms a compound in which each molecule is inter-connected. The connectedness allows the vibrational component of the 84 trace elements present in the salt to be in harmony with each other and adds to the balancing effect of the salt. When it comes to the holistic power of natural salt, the Himalayan Crystal Salt excels. Here is why:

- Under an electron microscope, crystal salt has a perfect crystalline structure.
- It is mined by hand and hand-washed.
- Crystal salt is immune to electromagnetic fields
- Crystal Salt contains no environmental pollutants.

3) ***Black Sea Salts***: We use this for our salt sauna.

According to ancient scriptures, kings and other people of nobility traveled long distances to the Black Sea seeking its curative powers. Today, expert salt makers harvest this exotic salt by hand from salt flats within the marshes. This traditional method of harvesting ensures that the salt retains its natural mineral content and remains chemical free. High concentrations of halophilic bacteria live in the water and salt crust and cause the slightly pink coloration of this salt. The bacteria produce a red carotenoid pigment which is a source of Beta-carotene. It is this pigment which protects the bacteria from intense radiation from the sun. Black Sea Salt has been said to provide pain relief from eczema, psoriasis, rheumatism, arthritis and muscle strain. It has also been used by the ancients to improve the health of the skin.

4) ***Epsom Salts***: We use this for our floatation chamber. This salt is made of the mineral magnesium sulfate-- a powerful sedative for the nervous system (thus, one reason for the profound relaxation experienced in the floatation chamber. When magnesium sulfate is absorbed through the skin, such as in a bath (or a float), it draws toxins from the body, sedates the nervous system, reduces swelling, relaxes muscles, is a natural emollient, exfoliator, and much more.

For home use:

* *Face Cleaner:* To clean your face at night, mix a half-teaspoon of Epsom Salt with your regular cleansing cream. Just massage into skin and rinse with cold water.

* *Homemade Skin Mask*: Apply the mask to damp skin. For normal to oily skin, mix 1 tablespoon of cognac, 1 egg, 1/4 cup of nonfat dry milk, the juice of 1 lemon, and a half-teaspoon of Epsom Salt. For normal to dry skin mix 1/4 cup of grated carrot, 1 1/2 teaspoons of mayonnaise and a half-teaspoon of Epsom Salt.

* *Foot Soak:* Soothe aches, remove odors, and soften rough skin with a foot soak. Add 1/2 cup of Epsom Salt to a large pan of warm water. Soak feet for as long as it feels right. Rinse and dry.

* *Skin Exfoliator*: Massage handfuls of Epsom Salt over your wet skin, starting with your feet and continuing up towards the face. Have a bath to rinse.

* *Remove Excess Oil from Hair:* Epsom Salt soaks up excess oil from hair. Add 9 tablespoons of Epsom Salt to 1/2 cup of oily hair shampoo. Apply one tablespoon of the liquid to your hair when it is dry; rinse with cold water. Pour lemon juice or organic apple cider vinegar through the hair, leave on for 5-10 minutes, and then rinse.

* *Hairspray*: Combine 1 gallon of water, 1 cup of lemon juice, and 1 cup Epsom Salt. Combine, cover, and let set for 24 hours. The next day, pour the mixture into your dry hair and let it sit for 20 minutes. Then shampoo as normal.

* *Hair Volumizer*: Combine equal parts of deep conditioner and Epsom Salt. Warm in a pan. Work the warm mixture through your hair and leave on for 20 minutes. Rinse.

* *Soak Sprains and Bruises*: Epsom Salt will reduce the swelling of sprains and bruises. Add 2 cups Epsom Salt to a warm bath, and soak.

* *Splinter Remover*: Soak in Epsom Salt, it will draw out the splinter.

Health Benefits of La Casa's 4 Salts:

Each of these salts confers the following health benefits:

1. Regulating the water content throughout your body.
2. Balancing excess acidity from your cells, particularly your brain cells.
3. Balancing your blood sugar levels and helping to reduce your aging rate.
4. Assisting in the generation of hydroelectric energy in cells in your body.
5. Absorption of food particles through your intestinal tract.
6. Help in clearing mucus plugs and phlegm from your lungs - particularly useful in asthma and cystic fibrosis.
7. Acts as a strong natural antihistamine and helps clear up congestion in your sinuses
8. Prevention of muscle cramps.
9. Making the structure of your bones firm - osteoporosis can occur when your body needs more salt and takes it from your bones.
10. Regulating your sleep - it is a natural hypnotic.
11. Maintaining your libido.
12. Preventing varicose veins and spider veins on your legs and thighs.
13. Stabilizing irregular heartbeats - in conjunction with water it is actually essential for the regulation of your blood pressure.
14. Alkalizes the body.
15. Useful in burns, bleeding and localized infections.

In ancient days, salt was the most precious element that could be given as a gift. Many of the La Casa clients come to understand the high quality of these salts and, similarly, introduce these salts, and their tremendous health benefits to friends.