**Healthcare professional perspective**

To the editor of [PUBLICATION],

Many of your readers have heard again and again that it’s important to cut down on sodium. Why? When there’s excess sodium in your bloodstream, it pulls water in and increases the volume of blood in your vessels. This can cause high blood pressure, form clots, and cause a whole other range of cardiovascular problems.

As a [HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL TITLE] at [ORGANIZATION], bringing awareness to this health issue is my top priority. Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of all Americans, and something as simple as reducing the sodium in your diet can significantly reduce your risk. The goal? The American Heart Association recommends no more than 2,300 milligrams (mg) of sodium a day and an ideal limit of no more than 1,500 mg per day for most adults. Right now, the average American consumes more than twice the ideal amount each day.

In my profession, we often hear people say that reducing sodium seems like an impossible task. It can seem that way when about three-quarters of the sodium we consume comes from pre-packaged, processed, and restaurant foods. Just one meal from a restaurant can put you over the daily recommended amount of sodium. That’s why the AHA has started a campaign to ask food companies and restaurants to reduce sodium in their foods.

This may seem daunting, but there IS something we can do about it. We all deserve the right to control the amount sodium in our food. I encourage my patients to take back control of their food by telling the food industry and restaurants that we want to see healthier offerings. You can too at heart.org/sodium.

[NAME]

[CITY]

[PHONE NUMBER (WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED)]

**Mother perspective**

To the editor of [PUBLICATION],

My doctor has told me time and time again that I need to eat healthy and watch my sodium. And I’ve just learned recently that excess sodium isn’t just an adult problem. Kids can be negatively affected by it too. 80-90% of kids in the U.S. get too much sodium, and this can start increasing their risk of high blood pressure as young as 1 year old.

I want to let other parents know that sodium reduction matters. Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of all Americans, and something as simple as reducing the sodium in your diet can significantly reduce your risk.

Especially as a parent, I am increasingly shocked at how much sodium is in the foods at the grocery store or when I eat at a restaurant. Nearly 77% of the sodium we consume comes from pre-packaged, processed, and restaurant foods. Just one of these meals can put you over the daily recommended amount of sodium that AHA recommends for ideal health.

Reducing sodium can seem like a difficult task, but there is something we can do about it.

The AHA has started a sodium reduction campaign, where parents like me can write to food companies and restaurants, asking them to keep sodium reduction a priority. I deserve the right to control the amount sodium in my family’s food. That’s why I took action.

I’m here to tell your readers that they can take back control of their food by writing to food companies at heart.org/sodium.

[NAME]

[CITY]

[PHONE NUMBER (WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED)]