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Publication date:
2015

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

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Citation (APA):
Knuthsen, P., Saxholt, E., & Trolle, E. (2015). Salt in bread - succesful?) Reduction of content in danish bread. Abstract from 11th international food data conference, Hyderabad, India.

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SALT IN BREAD – SUCCESFUL(?) REDUCTION OF CONTENT IN DANISH BREAD

High intakes of sodium are associated with high blood pressure, elevated risk of cardiovascular diseases and early death. In the Nordic countries reduction of average sodium intake to about 2-2.7 g/d, or 5-7 g salt/d, is recommended. Main sources of salt in the diet are processed foods e.g. bread, cheese and meat products. Salt has different technological functions in processed foodstuffs, and salt is important for taste.

To make a gradual reduction of salt possible, a joined work among food/health authorities, industry and other stakeholders was initiated a few years ago. From a consumer point of view a gradual reduction would do in order to adapt to lower salt preference.

To demonstrate a possible reduction, current salt levels must be assessed, and in the present study salt content of bread, covering Danish consumption in 2014, was investigated.

When monitoring a possible trend samples studied must represent the current consumption. Thus getting an overview of market shares is important, and quite a challenge as selection of bread is changing continuously.

A strategic sampling plan was made representing all relevant types of bread, based on information from manufacturers and their organizations, from market surveillance consultants, from the internet, and from visits to supermarkets and small local bakeries.

A total of 300 bread samples were taken for analysis during autumn 2014. Samples were categorized according to: main flour ingredient (wheat or rye bread), extraction rate of grain (fine or whole meal), content of whole kernels and seeds, and manufacturer (local bakery, bake-off, industry).

All samples were analyzed for sodium and dry matter, according to well-established methods.

For monitoring salt contents a follow-up study is planned within a few years. However, 2014-contents were compared to salt contents of bread from 2009, when a study of iodine levels also included analysis of salt. The statistical analyses showed minor differences between contents and years.

The new data confirm that bread is still an important contributor to salt intake, and still holds potential for reduction and further health improvement of the Danish population.

-Key words: bread,

Abstract category: Research methodology on food sampling – or

Food composition and quantitative intake studies/nutritional risk assessment – or

Food composition activities at national and regional food data network