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Three low salt websites and a new email list

1. www.saltmatters.org
2. <http://www.users.tpg.com.au/pschamb/mls.html>
3. <http://home.exetel.com.au/sharksaus/>

The *Salt Matters* website was joined recently by two others—an amazing coincidence that two separate people should think of this at about the same time. Each was quite unaware of the *Salt Matters* site at first.

The two newcomers are Peter Chamberlain and Allan Martin, both in New South Wales. Both needed to get full control of their salt intake.

When they scoured the shops for low salt foods, they were staggered to find that LS foods barely existed in NSW supermarkets.

They photographed each one they found with a digital camera and exhibited their trophies on two home-made websites to help all the other people who might be in the same predicament. Both took pictures to prove each food **actually existed**.

Now all salt skippers in Australia can look at page after page filled with colour pictures of the low salt foods these two were able to find.

The **pschamb** website is the one run by Peter Chamberlain. Both he and his wife have salt-related health problems that became much easier to treat when they followed the Australian Dietary Guidelines and Food Standards Code—choose foods low in salt (sodium no more than 120 mg/100g).

Allan Martin runs the **sharksaus** website. He tells us he is 44, and works as a maintenance fitter at Blue Circle Southern Cement in the Southern Tablelands. He needs to get very good salt control to prevent the severe vertigo of Meniere's Disorder.

The new email list

Saltmatters is the name of a new email support group for people who battle to control their salt intake in a food market loaded with salt.

To join just send a blank email to saltmatters-subscribe@ozdocit.org
To withdraw send one to saltmatters-unsubscribe@ozdocit.org.

We hope to form a large group providing a lively and useful on-going debate on every aspect of shopping and cooking for good salt control—a future gold mine of the practical tips that guarantee success.

In time we hope it will attract health professionals who teach the practicalities, as well as the carers, caterers and cooks who watch their own salt intake and that of others in their care.

The application will still get through if you put anything else into the email or its subject box, however all extraneous material left in those places will be discarded.

Pan Salt and Reduced Salt foods

Professor Heikki Karppanen of Helsinki invented Pan Salt about two decades ago as a big step towards reducing Finland's high national rate of salt consumption. The last issue of Salt Skip News (No 136, August 2005) brought news of its launch in Australia. Its composition is:

- sodium chloride (salt) 56%
- potassium chloride 29%
- magnesium sulphate 12%
- lysine 2%
- anticaking agent 1%
- potassium iodide trace

The trace of potassium iodide delivers a dose of iodine to the exact specifications for each population that uses it.

The Meniere's support groups heard of Pan Salt even before the launch—and got very excited—but Pan Salt was not designed to control vertigo.

Members of the general public who insist on using salt can benefit of course from changing to Pan Salt, but it is still 56% sodium chloride (common salt) so vertigo would return in Meniere's patients who used Pan Salt like ordinary salt in cooking or at the table.

Processed foods

In Finland Pan Salt almost halves the salt content when it replaces ordinary salt in processed foods—**with no effect on the taste**, and it could do the same in Australia for every product that used it.

Low salt (LS) processed foods

If the food industry used Pan Salt in low salt foods (foods with sodium up to 120 mg/100g) they would taste like foods with up to 215 mg/100g.

In theory Pan Salt would then have relevance to good salt control—with good urine results—but in practice the difference in flavour between 120 and 215 mg/100g is seldom very noticeable.

'those who did find LS foods tasted more salty would be re-educating their palates to look for more added salt'

Home cooked food

In theory again home cooks who measure things with scrupulous accuracy could make low salt meals by working on the same lines as the food industry.

Three main obstacles are:

1. those who did find LS foods tasting more salty would be re-educating their palates to look for more added salt
2. home cooks who measure things with scrupulous accuracy are a rare breed;
3. most people would find the difference in flavour too small to compensate for the trouble involved;.

Pan Salt in Reduced Salt (RS) foods

The regulations limit the sodium content of RS foods to 600 mg/100g, and Pan Salt would enable RS foods to meet that upper limit while tasting like foods with up to 1070 mg/100g. Again it re-educates the palate to want more salt.

Using RS foods in LS recipes

Here is a recipe for using Rosella RS Canned Tomato Soup (155 mg/100 mL), **barcode 9 332786 000181**

First dilute the soup as directed (one can of concentrate to one can of water). Then simply add an equal amount of vegetables, either fresh, frozen or canned. These are NAS foods that will bring the dish down below 120 mg/100g, making a low salt soup. Most of the unprocessed vegetables in this list have sodium as low as 10 mg/100g or less: peas, beans, green leaf vegetables, potato, pumpkin, sweet potato, sweetcorn (fresh, frozen or NAS canned).

The Coles NAS range is being reorganised

When Coles launched NAS groceries in 1983 you could phone and speak to John Tapp, the architect and manager of the new NAS range. John Tapp (in middle management) at first found it hard to persuade Coles to take this risk, but it paid off. He told us in a letter in 1984, 'No Added Salt variants of our Muesli, Peanut Butter and Tomato Juice **are now outselling** our "normal" salted products'. The 16 items in 1985 rose to 23 in 1987, but in the 1990s the fat message replaced the salt message and it has dropped to 8—Red Kidney Beans, Green Asparagus Spears, Sliced Beetroot, Mushroom slices in Butter Sauce, Peanut Butter Smooth and Crunchy, Baked Beans and Spaghetti.

Note (1) sodium in NAS Kidney Beans is under 10 mg/100g (not 170 as printed), (2) The NAS beetroot slices—one of their best products—is at present unavailable but Coles say it will return after a packaging changeover. Moreover a number of the other NAS products at present unavailable are going to reappear in a new range, to be called 'You'll Love Coles', and shoppers for NAS foods can expect to be 'well catered for'.

In future Coles intend to supply more information on the NAS range on their website www.coles.com.au Already Kim Tikellis, Nutritionist for Coles Myer Supermarkets, will answer shoppers' questions on (03) 9829 6828.



Jill's Cuisine LS Tomato Relish

At Jindera (NSW) about 10 years ago Jill of Jill's Cuisine used up a huge surplus crop of tomatoes to make a first-class LS home-made tomato relish.

It sold so well that she made it on a scale that has kept it on the shelves of Coles nationally for 9 years. The label shows sodium 53 mg/100g with salt in the ingredient list, but Analytical Services Tasmania has confirmed a sodium content of 60 mg/100g. You will agree when you taste it that this is a wonderful find.



Spring Valley RS Tomato Juice

In 1984 Coles sold more NAS tomato juice than salty tomato juice (see above). You could still buy it 19 years later—when *Salt Skip News* used it in a recipe for LS gazpacho soup (N/L 126, December 2003, page 4).

Coles have discontinued it and we can only get RS tomato juice. The alternative with the lowest sodium content is Spring Valley, with 140 mg/100g. About 10 years ago we tried to persuade Spring Valley to comply with the statutory definition of a healthy LS food (without success).

The ingredients are reconstituted tomato juice (minimum 98%), sugar, salt and vitamin C. Compare this with V8 LS Vegetable Juice on page 4 (reconstituted tomato juice 84%) with a sodium content of 110 mg/100g.

SALT SKIP NEWS
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Page 4 of 4

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Two LS ingredients to make LS Tomato Juice



V8 LS Vegetable Juice

V8 Vegetable Juice with sodium 110 mg/100g contains reconstituted tomato juice (84%), carrots (7%), celery (4.5%), beetroot (0.5%), parsley (0.5%), lettuce (0.5%), spinach, salt, vitamin C, food acid (citric acid) and spice extract.

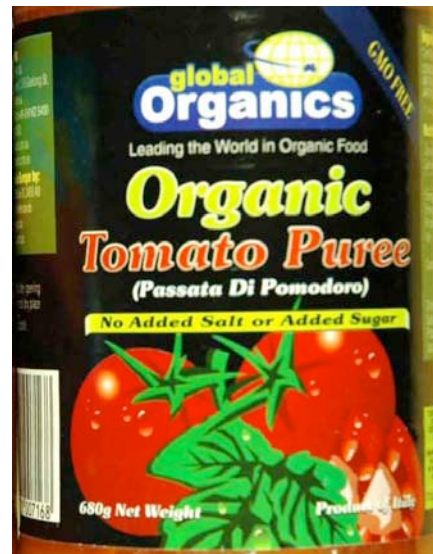
As expected it looks like tomato juice but tastes of celery as well. It shares shelf space with the ordinary V8 Vegetable Juice.

Global Organics NAS Tomato Puree

The sodium content of 9 mg/100g is supported by the ingredient list: 'Certified organic tomatoes'.

You can find it in health food shops and health food shelves of the supermarkets. This product is fully imported from Italy.

It weighs 680g (about 700 mL) while the other two are in bottles of 1 litre.



Merits of Spring Valley juice and these other products

Technically the only tomato juice available with a sodium content not far above the upper limit for LS foods is **Spring Valley** (page 3). **V8 LS Vegetable Juice** has a surprisingly similar composition. With only 16% of its tomato juice replaced by other vegetable juices some people accept it as tomato juice, but many notice the celery juice. This is pleasant but they say it is not tomato juice.

Global Organics NAS Tomato Puree is like a puree you could make with a blender from home-grown tomatoes, except that the home-made product would contain tomato seeds. The puree is good in soup and pasta sauces, but would not be mistaken for tomato juice.

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