**Wednesday 27 January 2021**

**BRING ON BETTER BANGERS**

* **New research reveals high salt content of sausages in New Zealand**
* **Top tips to reduce salt intake this BBQ season**

Sausages on the barbie are a great Kiwi summer tradition – but there’s a warning that the salt content could put you at risk of stroke.

That’s according to new research commissioned by the Stroke Foundation, which found many supermarket sausages contain very high quantities of salt.

“We don’t want to ban the banger,” says Stroke Foundation Health Promotion Manager, Julia Rout.

“But the research has shown that an average serving of sausages can contain half your recommended daily salt intake – and we all know how easy it is to load up the plate. The more salt you eat, the more you increase your risk of stroke.”

That’s because too much salt can cause high blood pressure – the number one modifiable risk factor for stroke.

But over 75% of strokes are preventable and working to reduce the amount of salt in processed foods, like sausages, will help to combat this.

According to the World Health Organization, it’s recommended that we only consume a teaspoon of salt a day – and a serving of sausages can contain around half a teaspoon.

“Some manufacturers have taken commendable steps to reduce salt in their products, but this isn’t happening across the board. The government needs to get more hands-on and set targets for reformulation that all manufacturers are strongly encouraged to reach,” explains Julia.

Each year, over 11,000 New Zealanders experience a stroke and at a cost of $1.1 billion to the New Zealand economy. Reducing salt consumption will not only help to reduce the risk of stroke and other cardiovascular diseases but will reduce the huge burden on the health sector and economy.

“This research highlights a cost-effective opportunity to improve public health by increasing our efforts to reduce the amount of salt in sausages – and other processed foods,” Julia says.

And it’s not just barbeque sausages – the research carried out by the National Institute for Health Innovation (NIHI) analysed a wide range of sausages including kranskys, hotdogs and meat-free products.

“Read the label on the packaging and look for low-options,” says Julia. “Sausages that contain less than 650mg sodium (salt)/100g of salt is what to look out for.

“And resist the urge to put that extra sausage on your plate – load up on salad instead.”

To read the full research document, please visit <https://www.stroke.org.nz/salt-advocacy>

**- ENDS -**

**Notes to editors**
Stroke Foundation’s top tips for eating less salt:

1. Eat more whole foods which are naturally low in salt. These generally sit around the perimeter of the supermarket, so try to get most of your groceries from this area rather than the centre where processed foods sit and salt is hidden.
2. Eat less processed meats and try to add more meat-free meals to your week. Try meat and vegetable kebabs as an alternative to sausages.
3. Try comparing labels on packaged food. Salt is listed as sodium. A low salt option will have less than 120mg of sodium per 100g of food.
4. Replace packaged foods with homemade versions then you’ll know exactly what you are eating.
5. Use herbs, spices and other seasonings instead of salt when cooking.
6. At mealtimes, aim to fill half of your plate with vegetables.

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**About the Stroke Foundation of New Zealand**

The Stroke Foundation is the only national charity in New Zealand focused on the prevention of and recovery from stroke. For 40 years we have actively promoted ways to avoid stroke and dedicated ourselves to working closely with stroke survivors across the country. The generosity of New Zealander’s enables us to help thousands of stroke survivors every year; providing them with critical services to ensure the best possible outcomes - not just for themselves, but also their family/whānau and carers too. Three quarters of strokes are preventable, so we will continue our vital awareness campaigns and health promotion programmes - saving thousands of lives. To find out more about the important work the Stroke Foundation does go to [www.stroke.org.nz](http://www.stroke.org.nz)