

Deep groundwater with sodium chloride levels of more than 25 g per litre is not suitable as a food

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Depending on the origin of the water, the sodium levels in mineral water may vary considerably. The range extends from 0.5 mg (0.0005 g) up to 3.4 g sodium per litre. Mineral water with a sodium content of more than 0.2 g/l must carry the wording "contains sodium". In order to claim that a mineral water is suitable for a "low sodium diet", its sodium content must be lower than 0.02 g/l.

Roughly 98 % of the salt used for cooking purposes in the home is sodium chloride. A high cooking salt intake is under discussion as a risk factor for the onset of high blood pressure. The consequences of this may be cardiac, cardiovascular and renal disease. The German Nutrition Society (DGE), therefore, recommends that adults restrict their average daily salt intake to 6 g. Besides processed foods like cheese, sausage, bread or ready meals, which sometimes have very high salt levels, mineral waters may also make a major contribution to daily salt intake. Consumers who wish to follow a diet with a low content of cooking salt should, therefore, pay attention to the labelling on mineral water.

The Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) has undertaken a health assessment of deep groundwater with a very high sodium chloride content of at least 25 g per litre from the angle of its possible use as a mineral water. Adults who consume one glass of the water would already reach the maximum tolerable daily intake of cooking salt recommended by DGE. In the opinion of BfR water with such a high salt content is not safe and is not, therefore, suitable as a food.

The full version of the BfR Opinion in German is available on http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/208/tiefengrundwasser_mit_natriumchloridgehalten_von_ueber_25_g_pro_liter_ist_als_lebensmittel_nicht_geeignet.pdf