Monitoring of amount of kitchen salt in bakery products and in meals

Excessive kitchen salt consumption is one of many factors contributing to development of lifestyle diseases in population of the Czech Republic. The evidence indicates that present consumption of salt, more precisely sodium increases the risk of cardiovascular and renal diseases in consumers. Meals, bakery products and meat products are among the most important sources of salt. This is why Regional Public Health Office of the Moravian - Silesian Region (RPHO) launched monitoring of kitchen salt amount in bakery products (nursery schools) and in meals (factory canteens).

The recommended daily intake for children from 3 to 6 years is 3 g. School catering makes 60 % of total daily consumption in children (15 % morning snack, 35 % lunch, 10 % afternoon snack) calculated as 1,8 g of salt. 20 samples of bakery products served as snackfood were taken in 10 nursery schools (1 portion = 50 g), regional products preferably. WHO recommendation for bakery products is 1,2 g NaCl/100g. This limit was met or slightly exceeded in approximately half of 20 samples.

In 2014 – 2015 we verified nutritional aspects of meals served at obstetric units in hospitals and in care services for elderly persons 65+. Among others amount of salt in all day diet was identified. In elderly persons the daily limit was exceeded nearly 2 times and in moms nearly 3 times.

In 2016 we tested meals in 30 school canteens. There were 30 samples of soups and 30 samples of main meal taken. It was established that meals served as lunch whether to pre-school or school children are considerably salty, in most cases it contains daily allowance of salt and often even more. Instant ready to cook mixtures are significant source of salt.

In 2018 we took 54 samples of meals served as lunch in 18 factory canteens. The recommended daily intake 5 g for adults (i.e. 2,1g per lunch) was above the limit in all samples in the range exceeding 2 – 7 multiple (see the graph below).

Food business operators (FBOs) where the samples were taken were presented with the salt monitoring results. It was shown that FBOs aren't motivated to control an amount of salt in their products as customers usually do not require it. RPHO therefore in the frame of inspections or educational activities appeals to FBOs to reduce the amount of salt in their products.