Executive Summary

High levels of dietary sodium (salt) are associated with raised blood pressure and cardiovascular diseases. National dietary surveys facilitate the monitoring of salt intakes and food sources within a population. The overall aim of this report was to estimate current dietary sodium intakes in Irish adults. Data for this analysis are derived from the National Adult Nutrition Survey 2008-2010 (n=1500, 18-90 yrs) (www.iuna.net).

The main findings of this analysis are as follows:

- mean dietary salt intakes in Irish adults estimated from urinary excretion were 11.1g/day in men and 8.5g/day in women aged 18-64 years and 11.0g/day in men and 6.8g/day in women aged ≥65 years.
- mean dietary salt intake exceeded the target of 6g/day for adults for all groups.
- estimates of salt intakes using food intake data compared to urinary excretion indicated that discretionary salt accounts for about 25-30% of total salt intake.
- the main food sources of salt are ‘Meat & Fish’ (especially ‘Cured/Processed Meats’) and ‘Bread & Rolls’, together accounting for over half of salt in the diet.
- when compared to the North-South Ireland Food Consumption Survey of adults in 2001, the mean daily salt intake in adults aged 18-64 years estimated from food intake data in National Adult Nutrition Survey 2008-2010 is lower by 1.1g.
- over the past ten years there has been reduction in the contribution of ‘Bread & Rolls’, ‘Cured/Processed meats’, ‘Spreading fats’ and ‘Ready to Eat Breakfast Cereals’ to salt intake, reflecting reductions in the salt contents in these foods.