In December 2008, sample units were collected from four popular nationwide family-style restaurant chains in 12 locations. Sodium values in children's macaroni and cheese, and chicken tenders were measured using a USDA-approved commercial laboratory using ICP methodology. The sample units were randomly grouped into 6 subgroups of 2 each and composited according to previously developed protocols for NFNAP. Values for sodium were determined using appropriate standard reference materials (SRMs) and in-house control materials. Analyses: The sample units were randomly grouped into 6 subgroups of 2 each and composited according to previously developed protocols for NFNAP. Values for sodium were determined by a USDA-approved commercial laboratory using ICP methodology. Serving size weights on individual sample units were determined prior to compositing. Quality Control: Analytical quality assurance was monitored through the use of appropriate standard reference materials (SRM) and in-house control materials. Statistics: mean, SEM using SigmaPlot.

Results
Sodium values for popular entrees and side dishes varied widely across four major national restaurant chains. In some locations, foods were not available or were different enough from the proposed food that they were not included (e.g., chicken nuggets). No substitutions were made.

• Sodium values for 100g of food (mean±SE) (Fig. 1a-f) varied widely, as did means among restaurants, and mean sodium serving size:
  - Mozzarella sticks: 314±57mg (n=23); range 46-521mg; Average = 1842mg/232g-serving.
  - French fries: 314±57mg (n=23); range 46-521mg; Average = 564mg/208g-serving.
  - Chicken tenders: 314±57mg (n=23); range 46-521mg; Average = 664mg/113g-serving.
  - Mozzarella sticks: 314±57mg (n=23); range 46-521mg; Average = 1152mg/135g-serving and mozzarella sticks (n=18; 853-1343mg/135g serving) and mozzarella sticks (n=18; 853-1343mg/135g serving) had the highest levels. The levels in the children’s macaroni and cheese were consistently among restaurants, chicken tenders (n=17) ranged from 524-684mg/100g (mean=664mg/113g serving) and macaroni and cheese (n=23; 317-417mg/100g (mean=332mg/226g serving). These observations provide a baseline value for sodium monitoring in several high-consumption restaurant foods and current, accurate data on restaurant foods for USDA databases.

Conclusions
These observations provide a baseline value for sodium monitoring in several high-consumption restaurant foods. As funding permits, more popular foods from national restaurant chains will be sampled and analyzed, focusing on those considered major contributors of dietary sodium.

References