

Salt Supplementation for People with Cystic Fibrosis – Further Information

Why is salt important for people with Cystic Fibrosis (CF)?

Salt loss leads to a higher risk of dehydration in people with CF because a low level of salt in the blood can lead to decreased thirst.

How much salt do people with CF need?

Salt requirements vary based on sweat chloride level, individual variation in sweat rate, climate, activity level and modulator use.

Daily salt needs for people with CF (with an elevated sweat chloride) are:

- 1000-4000mg for children ($\frac{1}{2}$ -2 teaspoons of salt)
- 6000mg for adolescents and adults (about 2½ teaspoons of salt)

This includes salt in food and salt added to food.

Assume that a *regular* diet contains about 1 teaspoon (tspn) of salt per day.

How to ensure your child with CF gets enough salt

The easiest way to get in extra salt is to add it to food. There is no need to cook with salt for the whole family, but the child with CF should use a saltshaker and liberally add salt to their food. Salty foods are also encouraged for people with CF (see list on back of page).

If more salt is needed, extra can be given through salt supplements.

Times salt supplements may be required

- When living or holidaying in hot climates
- With exercise
- During illness due to reduced intake and/or increased losses through fever, diarrhoea or vomiting
- When dietary intake is replaced with oral supplements or tube feeds with low sodium content

As a guide, aim towards the upper end of your child's daily salt requirements in hot weather or with exercise.

What if I am on a modulator?

Most modulators reduce sweat salt losses. Modulators work immediately on the salt concentration of sweat so if a modulator is missed or held, it will return to pre-modulator levels. The best way to know how a modulator has affected sweat salt losses is by having a sweat test. Talk to your dietitian about salt needs if taking a modulator.

Signs and Symptoms of Salt Depletion

Look for symptoms of salt depletion to guide you as to whether your child needs more salt.

- Fatigue / Lethargy
- Headaches
- Difficulty concentrating
- Dizziness / Light headedness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Muscle cramps
- Dark, strong smelling urine
- Decreased thirst and/or appetite

For more information

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and endorsed by WCHN consumers



Salt supplements

There are various options for supplementation when required in addition to salt in/on food.

These are more likely to be required in older children as they are more likely to be out in the heat or exercising intensively.

Options for sodium supplementation		
1 salt tablet	240mg	1/10 tspn
1 salt filled large gel cap	600mg	1/4 tspn
Gastrolyte / Hydralyte	1070mg per 1L	1/2 tspn per 1L
Homemade sports drink (recipe below)	1150mg per 1L	1/2 tspn per 1L

Homemade sports drink recipe

500mL cordial (standard or diet)
¼ tspn table salt (600mg sodium)

A note about Commercial Sports Drinks

Sports drinks are not made for people with CF so they may not contain enough salt to replace the losses of a person with CF.

As you can see in the table below, some are much higher in sodium than others.

Drink	Sodium (mg) per 1L
Gatorade endurance powder	830
Gatorade active (no sugar)	560
Gatorade	510
Gatorade no sugar	450
Powerade zero sugar	420
Powerade ION4	280
Staminade	140-379
Maximus	250
Prime	30

REMEMBER: BOTH SALT AND FLUID ARE IMPORTANT TO PREVENT DEHYDRATION. MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD IS DRINKING ENOUGH ESPECIALLY IN HOT WEATHER AND WITH EXERCISE

Examples of high salt foods

- butter and margarine
- cheese
- vegemite
- bread
- sauces, stock and gravy
- salted crackers, pretzels, nuts, chips, popcorn
- canned or packet soups, noodles & pastas
- pickled and canned vegetables
- olives

Can people with CF have too much salt?

It is most likely that if given too much salt, your child will pee or sweat it out. Excessive thirst may result if you are over supplementing with salt so if you notice this, wind back a little on the amount of supplement you are giving.

REMEMBER: THE MORE YOU SWEAT - THE MORE SALT YOU LOSE, SO YOU MAY NEED A SALT SUPPLEMENT IN HOT WEATHER OR WITH EXERCISE.

↑SWEAT = ↑SALT LOSS = ↑SALT NEEDS