



High Salt Diet

For People with Cystic Fibrosis

What is Salt?

Salt is made up of two compounds: sodium and chloride. Sodium is a major electrolyte in the body. It is important for muscle contraction, sending nerve impulses, and regulating fluid balance in the body.

Why Do People with CF Need More Salt?

Typically, when a person sweats, salt is reabsorbed by the body to be used again. However, in a person with CF, the salt is lost through the skin through sweat and is not able to be reabsorbed. In fact, someone with CF can lose 5x more salt than a person without CF!

High Salt Foods

Salt can be added to the diet by using the salt shaker liberally while cooking, at the table or eating foods that are higher in salt. Some examples are listed below:



- Canned vegetables
- Vegetable juices
- Olives, pickles, sauerkraut, and other pickled vegetables
- Commercially prepared pasta, tomato sauces and salsa



- Breads
- Salted crackers, chips, pretzels
- Instant flavoured rice, pasta, or potato dishes



- Cheese
- Cottage cheese
- Cheese spreads
- Buttermilk



- Salted nuts
- Salted sunflower seeds
- Canned beans with salt added
- Smoked/cured/salted/canned meats and fish



- Salted peanut butter
- Soy sauce
- Gravy
- Salted butter or margarine
- Condiments: ketchup, mustard, BBQ sauce
- Onion, garlic, celery salt



- Canned soups and broths
- Instant broth cubes

Signs & Symptoms of Low Salt Intake

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|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| • Reduced Appetite | • Poor Growth | • Muscle Cramps | • Stomach Pain |
| • Nausea | • Vomiting | • Irritability | • Headache |
| • Weakness | • Salt Crystals on Skin | • Fatigue | • Confusion |

When Do Salt Needs Increase?

Salt needs may increase for someone with CF when the body temperature rises. Sweat contains salt, so it is important to maintain salt levels during this time, as sweat losses increase. Replenish increased sweat losses with electrolyte solutions, sports drinks (Gatorade), or other salty beverages during times of increased need.

Below are some examples of when salt needs could increase:

Physical activity



Be aware of fitness and training levels compared with the type and duration of the activity.

Traveling to warm climates



Assess the environment (humidity and temperature) and be prepared before travelling.

During illness



Try drinking broth during illness to stay hydrated and replenish salt loss.

Summertime



Carry a water bottle with electrolyte solution around or bring salt packets when playing outside for long periods of time.

Helpful Tips

- Add salt generously to foods
- Monitor intake of salt and fluid
- Travel with small packets of salt or salt shakers
- Choose 'salted' varieties of foods. Avoid 'low salt' or 'no salt added' foods
- Try freezing electrolyte drinks into ice cubes or popsicles to be added to drinks or as a treat
- Monitor urine output to ensure adequate urination and good colour (aiming for light yellow)

Sports Drinks

Sports drinks often do not provide enough salt for people with CF. Extra salt should be added to sports drinks in the amount suggested below:

Gatorade/Powerade,
12 oz (350 mL)

add → 1/8 teaspoon salt

For lower sugar
alternative:
G2/Powerade Zero, 12
oz (350 mL)

add → 1/8 teaspoon salt

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