

Salt Replacement with Cystic Fibrosis

(Adult)

All individuals with cystic fibrosis (CF) have an increased risk of sweat losses of sodium and chloride – which are the minerals that make up salt. Increased loss is often due to exacerbations/infections, exercise, and hot or humid weather conditions. Individuals with CF produce the same sweat as non-CF sweat but due to the defect in the sodium-chloride channel the salt is not re-absorbed and travels to the skin. As the loss of salt and water increases the sodium levels in the blood stream do not increase - thirst is not triggered and dehydration risk increases. This is why individuals with CF need extra fluid and salt supplementation.

Signs and Symptoms of Dehydration:

- Decreased appetite
- Nausea/Vomiting
- Muscle cramps/weakness
- Fatigue
- Poor concentration
- Headache
- Salty crystals on the skin surface
- Decreased amount/frequency of urination



Dehydration can lead to thicker mucus in the lungs and intestines – thus increasing difficulty expelling secretions and potential gastrointestinal blockages.

There is no standard replacement dose of salt for individuals with CF and should be based on activity, weather conditions, symptoms, and nutrition intake.

As summer months approach, it is increasingly important to include foods that contain higher levels of sodium and focus on increasing fluid intake. Examples of foods naturally high in sodium are cheese, potato chips/pretzels, olives/pickles, sauces/gravies, and pizza. You can also add salt liberally to foods. Keep in mind that 1 teaspoon of salt contains about 2,000 mg of sodium!

Keep drinking fluids! Water is an excellent source of hydration but other options like coconut water, juice, and milk will help support calorie intakes as well. During periods of increased sweat loss utilize sports drinks like PowerAde®, Gatorade®, or Gatorade® G2. Feel free to add an additional 1/8 teaspoon of salt to the sports drinks to help!

Maintaining hydration can be difficult but remains a crucial part of your overall health!

Hydrate Hydrate Hydrate and don't shy away from the salt!