

Don't Forget About Salt – Advice for Adults with Cystic Fibrosis

If you have Cystic Fibrosis you will lose an increased amount of salt when you sweat. Salt is an essential mineral the body needs to help regulate water and fluid balance. If your body becomes low in salt, you can become dehydrated, even if you are drinking plenty of fluids. You therefore need to replace this salt by taking salt tablets and/or adding salt to your food.

When will I need extra salt?

You will need extra salt if:-

- The weather is warm, e.g.; during the summer months, holidays abroad.
- If you work in a warm environment, e.g.; leisure centre or factory.
- If you have a high temperature.
- When you exercise (if exercising is enough to make you sweat).



How can I take extra salt?

- You can add salt to your food to a level of taste you find acceptable.
- You can take salt tablets.

How many salt tablets should I take each day?

The usual dose for adults with Cystic Fibrosis is 4-8 tablets of slow sodium (600mg) daily. These should be taken at regular intervals during the day, e.g.; 2 tablets 3 times per day. If you are in an extremely hot environment you may find you need more than this. To compensate for an exercise session 2 tablets may be sufficient. Always drink plenty of fluids as well.



Can I take too much salt?

It is possible to take too much salt, but as your need for salt is high and if you follow these guidelines and increase your dose gradually, it is unlikely you will overdose on salt.

How will I feel if I become low in salt?

You may feel weak, feeble, nauseated or have stomach cramps. You may also feel very thirsty. If you are unsure what is causing these symptoms or what you should do, contact the Cystic Fibrosis Unit. Try to take salt tablets before any of these symptoms occur.

Remember!

The more you sweat the more salt you need! Drink plenty of fluids, especially in hot weather, after exercising or if you have a high temperature. If you have a kidney problem, high blood pressure or retain fluid in your abdomen, do not follow these guidelines. Discuss the amount of extra salt you should take with your doctor in CF clinic.

Information for Patients

Contact us:

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this information, please contact one of our CF Dieticians on :- 0121 424 1796/0121 424 1788 / 0121 424 2000 bleep 2425/2944/2734 or email: Joanne.barrett@heartofengland.nhs.uk, Toni.osborne@heartofengland.nhs.uk, Elizabeth.glennon@heartofengland.nhs.uk Claire.Evans@heartofengland.nhs.uk

Additional Information Sources:

For more information on all aspects of living with Cystic Fibrosis you can visit the Cystic Fibrosis Trust web site at: www.cftrust.org.uk.

For local news and events the West Midlands Regional Cystic Fibrosis Unit based at Heartland Hospital has its own website at: www.heartlandscf.org.uk.

Our commitment to confidentiality

We keep personal and clinical information about you to ensure you receive appropriate care and treatment. Everyone working in the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential.

We will always ask you for your consent if we need to use information that identifies you. We will share information with other parts of the NHS to support your healthcare needs, and we will inform your GP of your progress unless you ask us not to. You can help us by pointing out any information in your records which is wrong or needs updating.

This information sheet was produced by CF Dieticians, West Midlands Adult CF Centre, and Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust.

Please use the space below to write down any questions you may want to ask: