

Don't Forget About Salt!

Advice for Adults with Cystic Fibrosis

Our bodies normally respond to increasing temperatures by producing sweat, which cools us down. In addition, the thirst mechanism is triggered, stimulating us to drink fluids to stay hydrated and replace any water lost through sweating.

However when you have cystic fibrosis, not only do you lose an increased amount of salt when you sweat but you may be less likely to feel thirsty. If the salt losses are not replaced, you may suffer with symptoms of heat exhaustion.

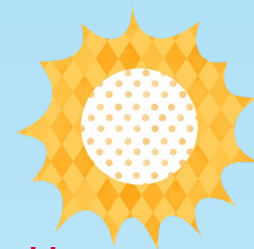
If you are taking a CFTR modulator therapy, you may require less salt than before you started this medication. The amount you will need is very individual., we would suggest you adjust your dose according to your symptoms.

What symptoms may I experience if I am low in salt?

- ✓ Weak
- ✓ Dizzy
- ✓ Muscle cramps
- ✓ Tired
- ✓ Nausea
- ✓ Headaches
- ✓ Thirsty
- ✓ Clammy skin
- ✓ Small amounts dark urine
- ✓ 'Gritty' skin/salt crystals formed on skin

When do I need extra salt?

- ✓ Warm weather e.g. during the summer months or when going abroad to a hot country
- ✓ If you work in a warm environment e.g. office, factory, leisure



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Information for Patients

How can I take extra salt?

- **Take salt tablets** – these are called Slow Sodium (600mg) - the recommended dose is 2 tablets 3-5 times per day. However, you may need to take more if you experience any symptoms or if you are sweating more, e.g. very hot weather
- Remember to **split the dose** of salt tablets during the day e.g. take 2 with breakfast, 2 with lunch and 2 with dinner
- In addition to salt tablets add extra salt to your food (at the table or when cooking) or choose salty foods to eat



If you are unable to get any salt tablets you can have additional on foods and in drinks

1/4 of a teaspoon of salt = 1 salt tablet

It doesn't have to be a hot and sunny day for you need to take salt tablets...it can still be very warm but cloudy

Many adults with CF will need to take salt all year round—speak to your CF Dietitian if you are not sure

Which foods could I choose for extra salt?

- ✓ Salted or dry roasted nuts
- ✓ Salted Crackers
- ✓ Crisps
- ✓ Cheese products e.g. dunkers/ strings
- ✓ Processed or cured meats e.g. ham / pepperoni

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, it is unlikely you will overdose on salt. Remember to split the dose of salt tablets and gradually increase the amount taken if needed.



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Don't forget to drink!

Not only is it important to replace the salt you lose when you sweat but you also need to replace the fluid. Remember to drink plenty throughout the day; don't wait until you feel thirsty.

It is recommended that we aim for 6-8 cups of fluid each day. Ideally choose non-caffeinated drinks. Drinks such as tea and coffee contain caffeine which can increase fluid losses in your urine. Whilst considering the sugar content if you have CF diabetes.

Good choices include:

- ✓ Water
- ✓ Milk
- ✓ Fruit juices (remember these are high in sugar)
- ✓ Squash or Sugar free squash
- ✓ Sports drinks - can be useful if you are doing lots of exercise. Choose hypotonic drinks as these re-hydrate you more quickly than water. They contain small amounts of salt and sugar and are usually suitable for people with. A commercial hypotonic sports drink should contain less than 4g of total carbohydrate per 100ml. Homemade versions are easy to make, as shown below

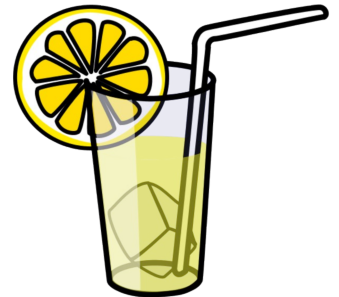
Homemade Hypotonic drink recipe

100ml squash

900ml litre of water

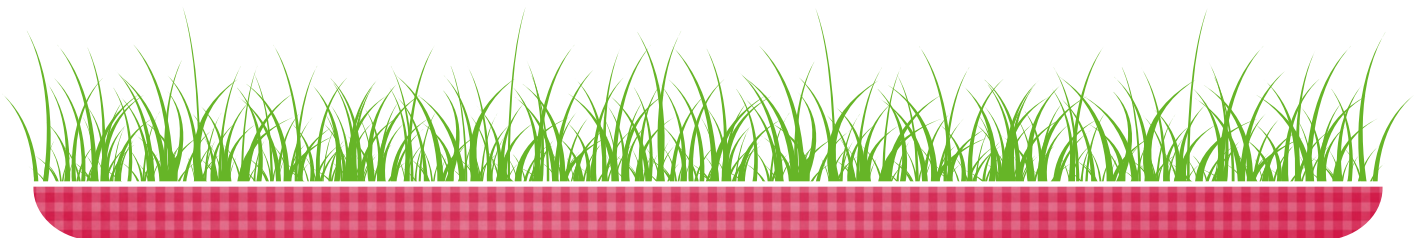
Large pinch of salt (1/4tsp) – this can be adjusted for personal taste/needs

Mix together and Keep Cool



Top Tips

- ✓ Fill up a sports bottle or flask each day with water or squash, with the aim of finishing it by the end of the day.
- ✓ Have a drink after each meal and snack – fluid can be filling and may reduce how much you eat
- ✓ If you are out and about, make sure you take a drink with you or buy one and take regular sips
- ✓ Take your medications with a large glass of water
- ✓ Fizzy drinks are ok to drink in moderation but can be filling and exacerbate acid reflux
- ✓ Don't like plain water? Why not add slices of lemon, lime, orange or a few mint leaves to add extra flavour or try mixing squash or cordial with soda water or sparkling water to give the 'fizz-fix'



Respiratory Directorate—Cystic Fibrosis Information for Patients

Contact us:

if you have any questions or concerns regarding this information, please contact one of our CF Dietitians.

Telephone: 0121 424 1796 (direct line with answer phone) OR Mobile: 07794375776

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 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. If we need to share information that identifies you with other organisations we will ask for your consent. You can help us by pointing out any information in your records which is wrong or needs updating.

Additional Sources of Information:

Go online and view NHS Choices website for more information about a wide range of health topics <http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx>, www.cysticfibrosis.org.uk, www.heartlandscf.org

You may want to visit one of our Health Information Centres located in:

- Main Entrance at Birmingham Heartlands Hospital Tel: 0121 424 2280
- Treatment Centre at Good Hope Hospital Tel: 0121 424 9946
- Clinic Entrance Solihull Hospital Tel: 0121 424 5616

or contact us by email: healthinfo.centre@heartofengland.nhs.uk.

Dear Patient

We welcome your views on what you thought of this patient information leaflet, also any suggestions on how you feel we can improve through our feedback link below:

Patient Information Feedback email: patientinformationleafletfeedback@heartofengland.nhs.uk

If you wish to make any other comments this can be done through the links listed below:

Patient Opinion: www.patientopinion.org.uk

I want great care: www.iwantgreatcare.org (Here you can leave feedback about your doctor)

Be helpful and respectful: think about what people might want to know about our patient information and this hospital and how your experiences might benefit others. Remember your words must be polite and respectful, and you cannot name individuals on the sites.

If you have any questions you may want to ask about your condition or your treatment or if there is anything you do not understand and you wish to know more about please write them down and your doctor will be more than happy to try and answer them for you.

