

Dehydration

People with cystic fibrosis (CF) lose large amounts of sodium and chloride (minerals that make up salt) in their sweat, leading to an increased risk of dehydration. Dehydration impacts many systems in the body and causes mucus to be thicker and more difficult to clear. To prevent dehydration, both water and salt should be increased either through diet or supplements, or both.

The amount of salt required will be different for each individual depending on symptoms, dietary intake, climate and levels of physical activity. More salt and water may be required when you are unwell, have a poor appetite, are having tube feeds, have increased exercise levels or in a hot climate.

Symptoms of dehydration

- dizziness
- loss of appetite
- feeling tired
- moody/grumpy
- headaches
- poor concentration
- salt crystals on the skin
- nausea/vomiting
- muscle cramps
- dark urine colour
- thickened mucus
- constipation

How to avoid dehydration

- add salt to food
- eat salty foods e.g. chips/pretzels, rice crackers, white bread, salted nuts, stock cubes, bacon, baked beans, vegemite
- use plenty of sauces, gravies and condiments
- use 'salted' varieties of food
- always carry a water bottle
- don't exercise in the heat of the day
- drink sports drinks such as Hydralyte
- avoid diuretic drinks such as tea, coffee, softs drinks and alcohol

- take salt tablets or liquid

Salt replacement

Individuals should always be guided by a CF dietitian as to how much salt they need, however, the rough guideline for adults with CF is approximately 4000-6000mg salt per day. That is at least 2-3 times the amount recommended for adults without CF. Salt requirements may exceed 6000 mg/day with extreme weather conditions or with excessive exercise. It is best to be guided by individual signs and symptoms.

Salt replacement supplements:

- 1 sachet glucoLyte = 360mg sodium
- 1 salt tablet = 240mg sodium
- 1 teaspoon salt = 1600mg sodium
- 1 café style sachet salt = 400mg sodium

Fluid replacement

It is recommended to drink 2-3 litres of fluid a day to remain hydrated, and during sport or exercise:

- 500-600ml 2 hours prior to exercise
- 150-350ml right before exercise
- 150-200ml every 15-20 minutes during exercise

For further information contact your CF dietitian or CF Centre.

Useful Resources

- CFFood: Nutrition and Cystic Fibrosis
<https://www.cfw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Nutrition-for-Adults.pdf>
- CFFit <https://www.cfw.org.au/what-we-offer/resources/>
- Exercise Factsheet
https://www.cysticfibrosis.org.au/media/wysiwyg/CF-Australia/Fact_Sheets/CF_Aust_Fact_Sheet_Excercise.pdf
- Exercise and Sport in School Factsheet
<https://www.cfw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/CF-Fact-Exercise-and-Sport-in-School.pdf>

Cystic Fibrosis WA

The Niche
11 Aberdare Rd
Nedlands WA 6009

Postal Address
PO Box 959
Nedlands 6909

T: +61 8 6457 7333
F: +61 8 6457 7344
E: admin@cfwa.org.au

Disclaimer: The information contained herein is provided in good faith. However accuracy of any statements is not guaranteed by Cystic Fibrosis Australia. We provide the information on the understanding that persons take responsibility for assessing relevance and accuracy. Individuals are encouraged to discuss their health needs with a health practitioner.

© Copyright Cystic Fibrosis Western Australia 2017