

Eating For CF- Salt & Fluids

Individuals with CF lose three to five times more salt through their sweat compared to the general population. It is essential that salt (also known as sodium chloride) be replaced daily in individuals with CF, to prevent deficiency and dehydration.

Signs and symptoms of salt deficiency and dehydration may include nausea, vomiting, muscle cramps, fatigue, salt crystals on the skin, dark colour urine, constipation and poor growth.

The amount of daily salt replacement needed is different for everyone due to varying sweat sodium losses between individuals. Sodium sweat losses can also be affected by illness, levels of exercise, dietary intake, hydration and the climate you live in. Therefore, salt supplementation should be reviewed on a regular basis.

The recommended daily sodium intake for adults with CF is approximately 6,000mg per day or two to three teaspoons of salt (one tsp salt= 2,300mg sodium). The easiest way to achieve this is through adding salt to your diet.

Tips to increase salt intake and avoid dehydration include:

- Add table salt to food
- Eat 'salty' foods (see below)
- Always carry a water bottle
- Take salt tablets (e.g. Toppin)
- Drink commercial sports drinks (e.g. Powerade, Staminade, Gatorade)
- Drink commercial rehydration solutions (e.g. Hydralyte, Glucolyte, Gastrolyte)



Foods containing ~1/8 tsp salt (290mg sodium)

50g packet salted potato or corn chips
1/3 cup salted peanuts or mixed nuts
1 cheese & crackers dip snack
2 slices of bread
1 wrap or piece of Lebanese bread
1 large croissant
1 1/2 tsp Vegemite
1 1/2 tbsp tomato or BBQ sauce
5 olives
3 small (2cm) cubes feta cheese
1 small can tuna (in brine, drained)
2 slices (60g) BBQ chicken with skin
1 tbsp capers

Information from Nutrition Guidelines for Cystic Fibrosis in Australia and New Zealand (2017).

Foods containing ~1/4 tsp salt (580gm sodium)
1/2 cup pretzels
2 slices processed meat (ham, salami)
1 rasher bacon
2 slices processed cheese
1 slice haloumi cheese
1 meat pie
2/3 large sausage roll
3/4 cup fried rice
6 chicken nuggets
1 1/2 slices pizza
1/2 cup baked beans
1/2 serve 2-minute noodles (with flavouring)
2 tsp soy sauce
1 sausage (thick)
1 cheese & bacon roll

Information from Nutrition Guidelines for Cystic Fibrosis in Australia and New Zealand (2017).

Fluids

Water

Every cell in the body needs water to work properly. You can get most of the water you need from what you drink, but you can also get water from many foods.

The amount of fluid you need depends on your age, weight, activity level, general health and the climate. As mentioned above, people with CF lose more salt through sweat and therefore require greater amounts of fluid to avoid dehydration.

In addition, the thirst sensation may not turn on as quickly in individuals with CF, as for other people, or may not be triggered at all. Therefore, it is important people with CF do not wait until they feel thirsty to drink water.

By the time the brain signals you to drink, you may already be dehydrated. Your CF dietitian can help you figure out how much fluid you need each day and help you decide on the best sources.

Alcohol

Advice regarding alcohol should follow the Australian Dietary Guidelines. The current recommendations advise that for healthy adults, intakes should not exceed more than 10 standard drinks a week and no more than four standard drinks on any one day.

The less alcohol consumed, the lower the risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury. For some adults with CF, avoidance of alcohol is advised. This may include those with liver disease, pancreatitis and those taking medication where alcohol interacts or is not advised to be had in conjunction. People with CF-related diabetes need to be aware of the risks of hypoglycaemia with alcohol use.

The amount of alcohol to allow in your diet should be a decision made between yourself and your CF care team.

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