

Cystic Fibrosis all about nutrition

Salt in the cystic fibrosis diet

With thanks to members of the Cystic Fibrosis Dietitians Group UK (CFDGUK)
for preparing the information in this leaflet.

Published 2019

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Introduction

This information was written by CF dietitians who work with adults, so **does not apply to children**. If you are looking for information about salt in the diet of a baby or child, you can find it in 'Pancreatic insufficiency and nutrition in cystic fibrosis'. You can also speak to your child's dietitian for personalised advice.

What is salt?

Salt is a mineral that is made up of sodium and chloride. It has many important functions in the body.

Why do I need salt?

Salt is important for your muscles and nerves to work. It also helps regulate the amount of water in the blood and tissues in the body. People with cystic fibrosis (CF) lose more salt through their sweat than those who do not have the condition, so need to include more salt in their daily diet.

How much salt do I need?

This varies between individuals according to symptoms, dietary intake, level of physical activity and the climate you live in. People from the UK should be more aware of the risk of low salt levels in the summer months, or if travelling to a hot country, as more salt will be lost through increased sweating.

Which symptoms are linked to having a low salt level?

When a person with CF sweats they lose salt and water, which can lead to dehydration. Low salt levels can cause reduced appetite, nausea, tiredness, headaches and muscle cramps.

How can I include more salt in my diet?

You can add salt to your food during cooking or after serving. You can also find salt in foods such as those listed below and in sports drinks. If the weather is very warm or you are travelling to a hot country your CF team may consider salt solution or tablets.



Examples of high-salt foods

- Salted snacks such as crisps, nuts, popcorn or Bombay mix
- Olives or pickles
- Processed meats such as ham
- Cured meats such as pepperoni
- Sausages
- Bacon
- Tinned or dried soups
- Ready meals and pizzas
- Ready-made meat pies, pasties and quiches
- Instant noodles or packet pasta and rice
- Cheese
- Tinned meat such as corned beef
- Tinned fish in brine
- Smoked fish
- Baked beans
- Gravies and stocks
- Sauces such as soy sauce or ketchup
- Marmite®
- Bovril®

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The information in this leaflet is general, please discuss it with your dietitian for a more personalised look at the topic.

This leaflet is part of a broad series on nutrition. Leaflets are available as online downloads and printed copies and can be found here: cysticfibrosis.org.uk/nutritionleaflets. You can also order the leaflets and our other publications from our helpline or download them here: cysticfibrosis.org.uk/publications.

Our helpline is open Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm, and can be contacted on 0300 373 1000 or by emailing helpline@cysticfibrosis.org.uk. Trained staff can provide a listening ear, practical advice, welfare/benefits information or direct you to other sources of support.

The information in this leaflet is based on clinical best practice, a consensus of opinion by dietitians within the CFDGUK and a consensus document on nutrition management of cystic fibrosis, which you can read here: cysticfibrosis.org.uk/publications.