Cystic Fibrosis Trust

Salt in the cystic fibrosis diet

Cystic Fibrosis Trust is grateful to the dietitians from the British Dietetic Association Cystic Fibrosis Specialist Group who prepared the information in this leaflet.

November 2025

Trusted Information Creator
Patient Information Forum

BDA The Association of UK Dietitians
Cystic Fibrosis Specialist Group

Uniting for a life unlimited

Contents

Introduction

This information was written by CF dietitians who work with adults. It is specifically for people who have been advised to take more salt. It also 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. This is unlikely if you are on a CFTR modulator. Always speak to your CF dietitian before making any changes to you diet.

How much salt do I need?

Salt requirements vary based on several factors including:

- The amount you sweat
- Your activity levels
- Whether or not you are on a modulator (such as Kaftrio, Alyftrek, Symkevi, Ivacaftor). You will lose less salt in your sweat if you are prescribed a modulator.
- Climate: people from the UK should be aware of the risk of low salt levels in the summer months or if travelling to a hot country due to increased sweating.
- If you have Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) or high blood pressure it is important to speak to your CF team about your salt requirements

A sweat test can help to determine your salt needs, discuss this with your CF team.

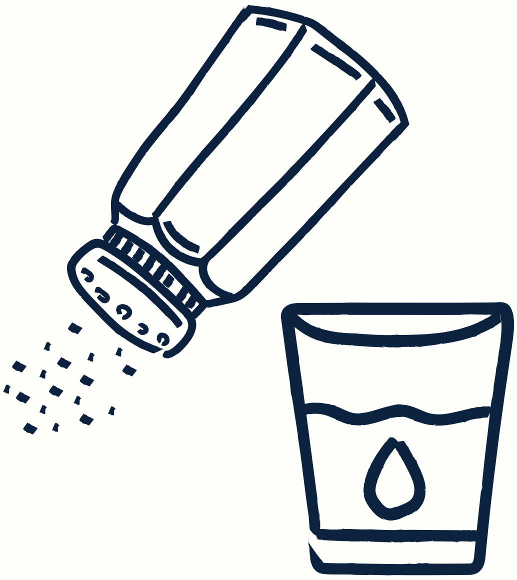
Remember: if you are worried about the amount of salt you need, or conditions linked to high salt intake such as high blood pressure – speak to your CF team.

Which symptoms are linked to having a low salt level?

When a person sweats they lose salt and water, which can lead to dehydration.

Symptoms of dehydration and salt loss include:

- Extreme tiredness, fatigue or lethargy
- Headaches
- Difficulty concentrating
- Dizziness or light headedness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Muscle cramps
- Dark, strong-smelling wee
- Decreased thirst and appetite



How can I include more salt in my diet?

The easiest way to get in extra salt is to add it to foods or choose salty food. If the weather is very warm or you are travelling to a hot country your CF team may consider salt tablets or salt solution.

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®

Notes for food recommendations

Further information

Find more information resources about living with cystic fibrosis at **cysticfibrosis.org.uk/information**.

Our Helpline is open 10am – 4pm Monday to Friday. It's available to anyone looking for information or support with any part of cystic fibrosis, a listening ear, or just to talk things through.

How to reach us:
- Call **0300 373 1000** or **020 3795 2184**
- Email **helpline@cysticfibrosis.org.uk**
- Chat with us on **Facebook**, **Twitter** or **Instagram**
- Message us on WhatsApp on **07361 582053**

Visit **cysticfibrosis.org.uk/helpline** for more information.

We welcome your feedback on our resources.

You can also ask for this resource in large print or as a text file. Email **infoteam@cysticfibrosis.org.uk**.

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This leaflet has been designed to be given out by a CF dietitian, along with their advice. If you downloaded or requested it directly from Cystic Fibrosis Trust we would advise you to discuss this information with your CF dietitian.

The information in this leaflet is based on clinical best practice and a consensus of opinion by dietitians within the British Dietetic Association Cystic Fibrosis Specialist Group. For detailed guidance on CF nutrition, please see the **Consensus document on nutritional management of cystic fibrosis**. Our consensus documents as well as other publications about cystic fibrosis can be found at **cysticfibrosis.org.uk/publications** or they can be ordered through our Helpline.

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

Next review due: September 2027

The information in this resource does not replace any advice from your doctor or CF team. It is important that you seek your team's advice whenever you want to change your treatment.

Cystic Fibrosis Trust

Cystic Fibrosis Trust is the charity uniting people to stop cystic fibrosis. Our community will improve care, speak out, support each other and fund vital research as we race towards effective treatments for all.

We won’t stop until everyone can live without the limits of cystic fibrosis.

cysticfibrosis.org.uk

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