

Sodium Chloride (Salt)



Sodium and chloride are minerals. Together they are known as salt. Because the body cannot make sodium and chloride, they are called “essential” nutrients and must be supplied by the diet.

How do I maintain or improve my intake?

- Eat foods that have a lot of salt
- Add salt to my food at meals and snacks
- Other actions _____

Why should I care?

Salt helps maintain the body’s fluid balance — keeping the right amount of water in the right places. Salt also helps muscles contract. Not getting enough salt can interfere with growth; reduce appetite; and cause stomach pain, weakness, nausea and headache. People who have CF lose extra salt in their sweat. To make up for the salt lost in sweat it is important to eat enough salt and salty foods every day.

How much salt do I need?

No one is sure how much salt children and adults who have CF need; the usual recommendation is to eat salty foods and use the salt shaker freely at meals and snacks. People with CF who play or exercise outside in hot weather may want to add 1/8 teaspoon of salt to 1 1/2 cups (12 ounces) of a sports drink, such as Gatorade®.

What are the best sources of salt?

Table salt is the best source of sodium chloride, along with foods that are processed with salt, like bacon and pickles. Fresh foods such as meats, chicken, fish, fruits, vegetables, rice and pasta have very little salt. But, these foods are high in salt when they are processed into canned and boxed soups, vegetables and pastas, and canned, boxed, and frozen dinners. Many food manufacturers are lowering the salt in their products, so it is important to read labels and use the saltshaker to add extra salt. Food labels tell you how much sodium is in food; foods that are higher in sodium are higher in salt.

Food	Sodium (mg)
Ramen, Cup Noodles (1 package)	1430
Salt (1/4 teaspoon)	580
Dill Pickle (1 medium)	570
Canned soup (1 cup)	480
Hard pretzels (1 ounce)	385
Pedialyte® (1 cup)	245
Cheerios® (1 cup)	204
Gatorade Endurance® (1 cup)	200
Bacon (1 slice)	185
Potato chips (1 ounce)	180
Canned carrots (1/2 cup)	177
Gatorade® (1 cup)	110
Whole milk (1 cup)	98



Can I get too much salt?

It is very unusual for someone who has CF to get too much salt. Instead, people with CF are at risk for too little salt, especially in hot, humid weather, or during heavy exercise. So if you spend time outside on hot days or exercise a lot, be sure to ask your CF Center RD how much salt is best for you.



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