

Appendix 11 – Hot weather advice

The movement of salt and fluid through the cells in the body is altered in cystic fibrosis. This means high levels of salt can be lost through sweating. This is especially important to consider in hot weather and even more so if a child is running around a lot or exercising. Your child will sweat more, meaning the sodium level in the body can drop quite quickly, and this also increases the risk of dehydration.

Symptoms of salt depletion

- Feeling tired
- Lethargic (floppy in infancy)
- Thirsty
- Finding it difficult to concentrate
- Headaches
- Irritable
- Loss of appetite
- Feeling sick or vomiting
- Cramps in limbs
- Sunken eyes

If your child vomits, has sunken eyes (dark circles) or is lethargic or floppy it is very important that you seek medical advice straight away as these are signs of DEHYDRATION or even HEATSTROKE.

Prevention of salt depletion

When travelling to very hot dry countries, or when the weather in the UK is particularly hot and dry it is vital to give additional salt and fluids to ensure the sodium levels remain normal.

These are some of the ways you can help:

- Keep out of the sun between the hours of 11am and 3pm.
- Provide opportunities for rest during the hottest time of the day.
- Infants: Dioralyte (or equivalent) sachets are ideal. Dioralyte is for oral rehydration and can be bought over the counter in chemists and supermarkets.
- Children: Ensure your child drinks plenty of fluid. Water, dioralyte and isotonic sports drinks are all good options. If choosing sports drinks, opt for the 'light' versions for smaller children as these have lower sugar content.
- Encourage your child to wear a hat and use usual precautions to avoid sunburn, including high factor sun cream.
- Add extra salt to your child's food and give them salty snacks like crisps, marmite and cheese.

Supplements

Salt supplements are available as a way of giving extra salt to children with CF. These are every effective when children are feeling tired or getting cramps due to hot weather.

- **Infants 0-12months:** Up to 2 sachets of Dioralyte per day. Each sachet is mixed with 200mls of water (use cooled boiled water if under 6 months). Once made up, Dioralyte can be kept in the fridge for 24 hours. This can be easier to achieve by giving 100ml twice a day to younger babies.

- **Children 1-7 years old:** 2 slow release salt tablets (Slow Sodium 600 mg each) per day during hot weather. For those who will not take tablets, Dioralyte can be used, 2–4 sachets per day.
- **Children over 7 years old:** 2–4 slow release salt tablets (Slow Sodium 600 mg) per day during hot weather. Can also have dioralyte.

Drugs & the sun

By the way, don't forget some drugs sensitise the skin to sun burn *e.g.* ciprofloxacin, doxycycline and voriconazole, so very high factor sun cream **MUST** be used.

If you have any concerns or questions about salt loss or managing in hot weather, please contact the CF Team. If you are travelling to a hot country it is important to let the team know as soon as possible to plan supplements if needed.