

CF Health Matters

Preventing Dehydration in CF Infants



What are the Signs and Symptoms of Dehydration?

Dehydration in infants and children often occurs due to diarrhea, vomiting, fever, and extreme hot weather.

The signs and symptoms of dehydration vary with its severity. Common signs may include:

| | |
|--------------|----------------------------------|
| headache | fatigue |
| weakness | sunken, dry eyes |
| irritability | lack of tears when crying |
| vomiting | dark, strong smelling urine |
| dry mouth | skin which loses its elasticity |
| drowsiness | a reduced level of consciousness |

Dehydration can be dangerous. If these symptoms are present, contact your CF caregivers or go immediately to a nearby emergency room.

How can Dehydration be Prevented in Breastfed Infants?

Breastfed infants need more salt.

Dehydration can be prevented in breastfed infants by supplementing the breast milk with salt, especially during hot weather.

Recommendations for salt supplements in breastfed infants:

Less than 6 months: 1/8 tsp of salt in 5 ml (1 tsp) water

More than 6 months: 1/4 tsp of salt in 5 ml (1 tsp) water

Give with a syringe throughout the day to provide the total 5 ml (1 tsp) volume.

Call your CF team, your pediatrician or go to your local emergency room should your infant show any signs of dehydration.

How can Dehydration be Prevented?

Dehydration may be prevented by using an oral electrolyte solution such as Pedialyte®, Enfalyte®, or Rehydralyte® during these times.

| Oral Electrolyte Solution | Salt content |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Rehydralyte® | 118 mmol/L |
| Enfalyte® | 23 mmol/L |
| Pedialyte® | 19 mmol/L |

Oral electrolyte solutions are specially formulated for infants and children to quickly replace lost fluid and electrolytes (salts).

Oral electrolyte solutions are different than common household beverages (juice, soda, & sports drinks) in their salt and sugar content. The large amounts of sugar in household beverages can draw water into the intestines and away from the rest of the body, making the diarrhea worse and increasing the risk of dehydration.

Oral electrolyte solutions are available in different forms (1 liter format, freezer pops, or single servings) and multiple flavors. They should be used for all CF infants who are at risk of dehydration.

Intravenous rehydration is sometimes the only method able to restore all the fluid and salt losses.



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