

Electrolyte and Salt Supplements

Salt is a helpful tool when it comes to increasing the blood volume of our patients with orthostatic intolerance (OI). Extra salt and water in the blood help to retain fluid within the body which increases the volume of the blood. This increase in blood volume makes it easier for the body to return blood from the legs and abdomen back up to the heart and brain.

You may be hesitant to increase your salt intake due to the common narrative that salt is bad for you. In a healthy person, too much salt can cause a variety of adverse symptoms and could even possibly lead to heart disease or stroke. In patients with OI, this extra salt is needed and we find that most of our patients can tolerate this increase in salt without provoking any additional symptoms. The amount of salt needed daily varies from patient to patient, but the general recommendation is 3-5 grams of salt daily. Some patients do not tolerate a higher level of salt as well as others. Either way, an increase in salt, whether it be big or small, is generally recommended for our patients.

With an increase in salt intake, there needs to be an increase in fluid intake as well. Without the increase in fluid, the blood volume will not expand like is needed for OI. We usually recommend at least 60-100 ounces of fluid daily. Water is fine as long as there is an adequate salt intake. Some patients also prefer sports drinks like Gatorade or Powerade. These are drinks that already contain salt and other electrolytes. These drinks are a great option, many just contain large amounts of sugar so that is something to keep an eye on.

There are lots of options when it comes to increasing salt and electrolytes in the diet. From rehydration mixes and sports drinks to salt tablets, there is an option for everyone.

Salt tablets are a great option for increasing sodium intake. They allow you to increase your salt intake without having to eat overly salty foods. There are a few readily available options, Thermotabs, SaltStick Vitassium, and Klaralyte.

	Sodium (mg)	Potassium (mg)
Thermotabs	180	15
SaltStick Vitassium	250	50
Klaralyte	250	50

There are more options available for salt tablets, these are the most readily available ones that have been recommended by our patients.

When individuals decide to increase their sodium intake with one of these salt tablets, we suggest starting with one tablet daily and working gradually up to two tablets three times a day. Some patients tolerate even higher doses. By stepping up the dose slowly, individuals can determine how much is optimal within this range. Salt tablets are available without a prescription.

In addition to salt tablets, there are also oral rehydration mixes and sports drinks. These are usually flavored and sweet so they taste good. Here are some of them: TriOral, Nuun, Liquid IV, Normalyte, LMNT, Gatorade, Gatorlyte.

	Sodium (mg)	Potassium (mg)
TriOral (1/2 packet [10.3 g]/17 oz)	1300	750
Normalyte (flavored) (1 10.5 g packet/16 oz)	851	393
Nuun (instant) (1 tablet/16 oz)	520	385
Liquid IV (1 16 g packet/16 oz)	500	380
LMNT (1 6g packet/16 oz)	1000	200
Gatorade (1 bottle, 591 mL)	270	80
Gatorlyte (1 bottle, 591 mL)	490	350

More options exist for rehydration mixes and sports drinks, but these are some of our patients' favorites. Be sure to experiment with different products to find your favorite!

Many of these products can be found in stores. If a product cannot be found in stores, it is usually available online on the company website or places like Amazon. There are also recipes online to make your own mix.

Foods high in salt content are also an important addition to this diet. **Here are some foods high in salt to incorporate into your diet:**

- Pickles/pickled foods
- Jerky
- Chips
- Pretzels
- Lunchmeat/cold cuts
- Salted nuts
- Bacon/turkey bacon
- Olives
- Crackers
- Soup/broth
- Pizza
- Macaroni and cheese

- Tacos/burritos/quesadillas
- Vegetable juice
- Dressings/sauces
- Frozen meals
- Canned vegetables
- Hot dogs/sausage
- Canned meats/fish

There are more foods high in salt than those listed here, so feel free to experiment with some salty foods and never shy from adding some additional salt to your meals!

Always make sure that you are getting enough fluids daily when you are increasing your salt intake (at least 60-100 ounces).

SaltStick Vitassium offers a 25% discount on their products online if they are used for chronic illness management.

Helpful links:

<https://www.dysautonomiasupport.org/hydration/>

<https://saltstick.com/pages/discover-vitassium>

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