

Electrolyte mix (E-mix)

Introduction

This leaflet will give you information about what E-mix is and how to use and store it. If you have any questions, or if you are unsure about anything, ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice.

Please read this leaflet carefully before you start using E-mix. Keep it in a safe place as you may need to refer to it again.

What is Electrolyte mix (E-mix)?

Electrolyte mix (E-mix) is a glucose-electrolyte solution, also known as an oral rehydration solution (ORS) and is used in the management of some people with conditions such as a high output stoma, an enterocutaneous fistula or intestinal failure (also known as short bowel syndrome). As a result of these conditions, the small intestine's ability to maintain fluid and electrolyte balance is reduced and this can lead to dehydration and electrolyte imbalance. Many patients will require intravenous nutrition or intravenous fluids which provide nutrition, electrolytes and fluid to maintain health and growth but ORS such as E-mix are important to maintain body fluid balance and can reduce the need for intravenous treatment.

How does E-mix work?

In patients with intestinal failure, hypotonic or "low sodium" fluids such as tea, coffee, water, alcohol, carbonated drinks and fruit juice lead to sodium and fluid moving from the body into the bowel and are then passed out of the body. This leads to excess fluid and sodium losses and patients will feel very thirsty and dehydrated. This is why hypotonic fluids are usually restricted to 500ml-1000ml per day and should be avoided when thirsty, using E-mix instead. The glucose in the E-mix boosts the absorption of both sodium and water and this precise balance of sodium and glucose keeps sodium and water in the body and reduces their movement into the bowel.

How do I prepare E-mix?

The solution must be prepared freshly every day using the following recipe. Measuring spoons will be provided with your medication so please use them.

- 20g (six level 5ml spoonful) of glucose powder
- 2.5g (one heaped 2.5ml spoonful) of sodium bicarbonate (baking soda)/ if you cannot tolerate the taste then use sodium citrate powder

- 3.5g (one level 5ml spoonful) of sodium chloride (table salt)

These are then to be dissolved in one litre of cold tap water, and you will need to drink the prescribed volume throughout the day. This provides 90mmol/L of sodium.

You may find that the solution tastes bitter due to the sodium bicarbonate. This can be minimised by storing the solution in the fridge and drinking it chilled. It can also be frozen and made into ice cubes, and drunk as slush or a small amount of fruit juice or squash (lemon or lime squash) can be added. Sipping the solution through a straw can minimise the bitter taste. If this continues to be a problem, the sodium bicarbonate can be replaced by the same quantity of sodium citrate, which can be prescribed by your GP.

How should I store my E-mix?

E-mix can be stored at room temperature or in the fridge, and any remaining solution must be thrown away after 24 hours and a fresh batch prepared the next day.

How can I get a further supply?

You can buy the powders from any community pharmacy and some supermarkets. They are cheaper to buy compared to the cost of getting it through a prescription if you pay prescription charges.

If you need to get E-mix prescribed, you can ask your GP to supply you with original packs (boxes) of the three powders (glucose, sodium bicarbonate and sodium chloride). You will then be able to use these to measure out and make up the E-mix according to the recipe above.

Who can I contact for more information?

The information in this leaflet is not intended to replace your doctor's advice. If you need more information or have any questions, please contact the hospital medicines information department on 020 8869 2762 (Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm). They can also answer any questions about the medicines which you have been prescribed from the Trust.

General Trust Information

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS is a confidential service for people who would like information, help or advice about the services provided by any of our hospitals. Please note that this service does not provide clinical advice so please contact the relevant department directly to discuss any concerns or queries about your upcoming test, examination or operation.

If you would like this information in an easy to read format, large print, braille, different format or language, please contact the PALS team on 020 8869 5118 or email lnwh-tr.PALS@nhs.net. We will do our best to meet your needs.