

CYCLOPEDIA

Questions answered, subjects explained – Cyclopedia is your bimonthly cycling reference guide

Right and opposite: Alamy



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Health

Take with a pinch of salt?

Q Nowadays we're advised to reduce our salt intake. I suspect this is based on the large amounts in processed food. Yet we're also advised to use drinks containing extra salt to replace that lost in sweat during exercise. This seems contradictory. Are we cyclists likely to be consuming too much salt or too little? I occasionally get cramp while swimming or sleeping but my blood pressure is normal.

Gideon Reade

A You are right, Gideon, that health experts advise us to keep the amount of salt in our normal diet to around 6g, or a heaped teaspoon, daily. Modern processed food and takeaways contain extra salt for flavour, and it is easy to exceed this without realising. Excessive salt intake can lead to high blood pressure. Read more here: [nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-types/salt-in-your-diet/](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-types/salt-in-your-diet/).

When we are cycling hard we sweat and lose salt as well as water from our bodies. The World UltraCycling Association suggests that on a hot, humid day we may lose 12g of salt in six hours from sweating. Clearly this needs to be replaced, and the simplest way is to drink sports (electrolyte) drinks but also to add some salty snacks. The sports drinks will replace about half the salt we need and the snacks are needed for the rest. Low sodium can cause severe problems such as bloating, reduced urination, headaches and confusion. More

Your Experts



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commonly it can cause muscle cramps.

The answer to your question is therefore: it depends. On a non-cycling day, keep to a healthy intake. When pushing hard in hot weather, be aware you will need extra salt to avoid problems.

Dr Kate Brodie

Technical

Under pressure

Q I have a KTM e-bike, which is the heaviest bike I've ever owned. I've found that unless the tyres are maintained at their maximum pressure of 60psi, I'm likely to suffer a puncture on a ride. Is this to be expected? I'm almost 15 stone. I changed the original Continentals to Schwalbe Marathon Plus a couple of years ago, which has made a difference. The tyres are for a 29 inch wheel.

Andrew Monaghan

A You don't state the width of your tyres, but assuming you are riding the 47-622 version of the Marathon Plus, the maximum pressure is 70psi. Inflating them to this pressure may improve matters, although your likelihood of getting a puncture may be due to local riding conditions and the presence of sharp debris rather than tyre pressure.

Richard Hallett

Technical

SRAM/Shimano compatibility

Q I have a SRAM 10-speed groupset on a road bike and need to change the cassette soon. It's £52 for the 11-36 SRAM 1050 cassette and only £28 for the Shimano 11-36 HG50. It seems to say online that SRAM/Shimano cassettes are cross compatible. But my local bike shop says it's best to stick with a matching SRAM cassette. Are they right or can I just use the cheaper cassette?

hoogerbooger, on the Cycling UK Forum