

Electrolyte Cheat Sheet

As a nurse you are expected to know about electrolytes, their normal levels, and what effect they have on the body if they fall outside of their usual range. Here are a few key electrolytes you'll want to memorize!

Calcium

High Level Effects:
bone pain, muscle weakness, excessive thirst, lethargy, nausea

Low Level Effects:
numbness and tingling in digits, muscle cramps, wheezing, fatigue

Normal Level

Total:
2.2-2.6 mmol/L or
8.5 to 10.2 mg/dL

Ionized:
4.8 to 5.6 mg/dL

Chloride

High Level Effects:
diarrhea, vomiting

Low Level Effects:
diarrhea, vomiting

Normal Level

95-105 mEq/L

Magnesium

High Level Effects:
diminished deep tendon reflexes, flushing, headache, nausea, drowsiness

Low Level Effects:
muscle weakness, twitches, or tremors; irritability, insomnia, drowsiness

Normal Level

1.5-2 mEq/L

Phosphorus

High Level Effects:
osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease

Low Level Effects:
changes in mental state, bone pain/fragility, fatigue, weight loss, weakness

Normal Level

2.5 to 4.5 mg/dL

Potassium

High Level Effects:
heart arrhythmias, numbness and tingling, breathing problems

Low Level Effects:
muscle weakness, fatigue, heart arrhythmias

Normal Level

3.5-5 mEq/L

Sodium

High Level Effects:
lethargy, myoclonic jerks, confusion, nystagmus, tachycardia

Low Level Effects:
nausea and vomiting, lethargy, seizure, neurological deficits

Normal Level

135-145 mEq/L

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