

# Understanding the concern about low blood sodium in older adults

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Hyponatremia, or low blood sodium, occurs when the concentration of sodium in your blood is abnormally low. This can occur due to certain medications and medical conditions.

Sodium plays a key role in your body. It helps maintain normal blood pressure, supports the work of your nerves and muscles, and regulates your body's fluid balance.

In hyponatremia, one or more factors cause the sodium in your body to become diluted. When this happens, your body's water levels rise, and your cells begin to swell. This swelling can cause many [health problems](#) that are mild to life-threatening.

Older adults may have more contributing factors for hyponatremia, including age-related changes, taking certain medications and a greater likelihood of developing a chronic disease that alters the body's sodium balance.

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