



## Symptoms of Low Sodium Levels (Hyponatremia)

Low sodium, or hyponatremia, occurs when the concentration of sodium in your blood falls below 135 milliequivalents per liter. Since sodium plays a critical role in regulating fluid balance and supporting nerve and muscle function, this condition can produce a wide range of symptoms that vary in severity depending on how quickly levels drop and how low they become.<sup>[1] [2] [3]</sup>

### Mild to Moderate Symptoms

When sodium levels drop gradually or remain only mildly low, many people may not experience any noticeable symptoms. However, when symptoms do appear, they typically include:<sup>[4] [5] [6] [1]</sup>

**Common early signs** include fatigue or low energy, headache, nausea, and loss of appetite. You may also experience dizziness—particularly when standing up—muscle cramps or weakness, restlessness, and irritability. Some people notice mild confusion or forgetfulness, along with nausea and vomiting.<sup>[3] [6] [1] [4]</sup>

### Severe Symptoms

As sodium levels drop further or decline rapidly, symptoms become progressively more serious. Severe hyponatremia, defined as sodium levels below 125 millimoles per liter, can produce alarming neurological effects. These include:<sup>[2] [1] [4]</sup>

**Neurological complications** manifest as severe confusion and disorientation, difficulty concentrating, and altered mental status. Muscle problems escalate to prominent spasms and twitching, along with extreme weakness. More dangerous symptoms include muscle breakdown (rhabdomyolysis), seizures, hallucinations, decreased consciousness, difficulty breathing, and ultimately coma.<sup>[7] [6] [1] [2]</sup>

### Why Severe Symptoms Develop

The brain is particularly vulnerable to low sodium because it swells as water moves into brain cells in response to the sodium imbalance. Since the skull cannot expand to accommodate this swelling, brain swelling can cause permanent damage if not corrected gradually. **Acute hyponatremia**—where sodium levels drop rapidly in less than 48 hours—is especially dangerous compared to chronic hyponatremia, which develops slowly.<sup>[6] [2] [7]</sup>

## When to Seek Emergency Care

Individuals experiencing vomiting, seizures, loss of consciousness, severe confusion, or any other serious neurological symptoms require immediate medical attention. These symptoms can be life-threatening if not treated promptly. A healthcare provider can diagnose hyponatremia through blood and urine tests and determine the appropriate treatment based on the underlying cause.<sup>[1] [3]</sup>



1. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/323831>
2. <https://www.preventivemedicinedaily.com/diseases-conditions/endocrine/metabolism/hyponatremia/what-happens-to-your-body-when-you-are-low-on-sodium-key-symptoms-and-effects/>
3. <https://www.singlecare.com/conditions/low-sodium-symptoms>
4. <https://erofmesquite.com/blog/low-sodium-symptoms/>
5. <https://www.healthline.com/health/hyponatremia>
6. <https://www.kidney.org/kidney-topics/hyponatremia-low-sodium-level-blood>
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8. <https://www.merckmanuals.com/professional/endocrine-and-metabolic-disorders/electrolyte-disorders/hyponatremia>
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