

Drinks for Sports

The most important thing to remember during your activity is to drink water, even if you're not thirsty or it's cold outside. Kids often have a poor sense of thirst and need to be reminded to drink during activity.

You lose a lot of fluids not just through sweat but heavy breathing as well. Sweating is an effective way for your body to keep cool but if you don't drink enough fluids it can lead to dehydration.

Water is also needed by the body to carry nutrients and oxygen to working muscles, remove toxins and waste products, regulate body temperature, maintain normal blood pressure and heart rate, and lubricate joints. So even a small amount of dehydration can zap energy and impair performance. It is essential that athletes drink before, during and after activity.



All liquids count: for hydration. Drink until you're no longer thirsty, then a bit more. Plain water is best, especially for children, and activities lasting less than an hour. For intense activities lasting longer than an hour, or that cause you to sweat a lot, or in extreme heat, carbohydrate stores can get used up. In this case you might want to break for a small snack or sip (not gulp) on a sports drink. For most children and teens, routine physical activity for less than 3 hours in normal weather conditions, the use of a sports drink is unnecessary.

When water is combined with a small snack, the effect is similar to that of a sports drink. Commercial sports drinks are designed for adult athletes and contain carbohydrates and electrolytes. Watch out for highly marketed products that are overly sweetened or artificially sweetened!

HERE ARE SOME HELPFUL TIPS TO ENSURE PROPER HYDRATION IS MAINTAINED:

- About 2-3 hours before exercise, drink 1-2 cups of fluids.
- During activity, sip about ½ cup of fluid every 15-20 minutes.
- Post-workout, drink beyond thirst as exercise dulls the thirst mechanism.
- Avoid carbonated, caffeinated and highly sweetened beverages. They are hard to absorb which can lead to stomach upset, are difficult to drink enough of, and can negatively impact performance.
- Don't forget to drink on cold weather days, during winter activities and when in an ice arena.
- Enjoy fruits and vegetables that are high in water content, like watermelon, oranges, grapes, celery, lettuce and cucumbers.
- Plain milk is an excellent recovery drink. It has just the right amount of protein, carbohydrates, nutrients, and fluid your body needs after a tough game or practice.

ENERGY DRINKS – NOT TO BE MIXED WITH SPORTS!

Some people confuse sports drinks with energy drinks. Sports drinks can rehydrate the body and replenish lost electrolytes during intense physical exertion. On the other hand, energy drinks contain caffeine, which is a diuretic and can actually worsen dehydration. Since energy drinks are carbonated, it's difficult to consume what you need to stay hydrated. The body may have a hard time digesting them due to the high amount of sugar. These drinks may also contain unnecessary amino acids or herbal ingredients. It is for these reasons that energy drinks have no place in sporting activities.

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