

Hydration, Sugary and Energy Drinks

Staying hydrated is essential for everyone, but athletes have an even greater need to maintain proper hydration. The best substance to use for hydration is water. Water is the most important nutrient for life and has many important functions including regulating temperature, lubricating joints, and transporting nutrients and waste throughout the body. While specific fluid recommendations aren't possible due to individual variability, most athletes can use the following guidelines as a starting point and modify their fluid needs accordingly.

Hydration before Exercise

- Drink about 15-20 fl. oz., 2-3 hours before exercise
- Drink 8-10 fl. oz., 10-15 min before exercise

Hydration during Exercise

- Drink regularly during exercise
- If exercising longer than 90 minutes, drink 8-10 fl. oz. of a sports drink (with no more than 8 percent carbohydrate) every 15-30 minutes

Hydration after Exercise

- Drink 20-24 fl. oz. water
- Consume a 4:1 ratio of carbohydrates to protein within 2 hours after exercise to replenish glycogen stores

Sugary Drinks

- **Sports drinks, like Gatorade, contain excess sugar and are not recommended unless you are exercising for more than 60-90 minutes in really hot weather.**
- Drinking too many sodas (or any sugar-sweetened beverage) increases your calories and takes the place of more nutritious/healthier drink options like water. **1 can of soda contains 10 teaspoons of sugar.**
- **Sugars** are carbohydrates that provide the body with energy. They occur naturally in fruits. You should try to consume only natural sugars. (No more than 5 to 8 teaspoons per day, 21 to 24 grams per day for girls, 25 to 30 grams per day for boys.)

Energy Drinks

- Energy drinks, energy shots, and other energy products contain large amounts of caffeine and an assortment of other ingredients including sugar.
- Consumption of large amounts of caffeine may lead to serious cardiovascular events, seizures, death, and/or dependence on caffeine which causes poor sleep, and possible developmental problems.
- Heavy consumption of energy drinks may result in excessive consumption of B vitamins, such as niacin or pyridoxine, which may result in liver or nerve damage.
- The energy boost from energy drinks is only temporary and is most likely accompanied by other problems. There are healthier and more effective ways to boost energy levels.
- Energy drinks are not the same as sports drinks. They should not be used to rehydrate because they contain so much caffeine.

Check for Understanding

- Should you ever drink sugary drinks while you are exercising? Why or why not?

- Are energy drinks healthy for you? Why or why not?

- What could occur if you consume too much caffeine?

- How much water do you drink each day? Is this enough for you to stay hydrated during your work outs? Why or why not?

Coach's Reflection: