

June 2006 Health Bulletin for YOUTH

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(Health Education through Extension Leadership) Staff

Cooperative Extension Service

Sports Drinks: Do You Need One?

Think about your favorite physical activity. Do you picture yourself outside playing or shooting hoops with your friends? Maybe you like to go for a bike ride on a beautiful day. You might even be involved with a sports team like soccer, baseball, or volleyball. One thing all of these physical activities have in common is they make you sweat! This is especially true if you are outside on a hot day being active. Another thing they have in common is they can make you thirsty.

What is Dehydration?

When your body sweats it is losing fluid. Dehydration (*dee-hi-dray-shun*) happens when the body loses more fluid than what you put in it by drinking. Your body responds to this dehydration by making you thirsty so that you'll drink fluid to replace what has been lost. This fluid is important to the functions that occur in your body that keep you moving and healthy.

When activity makes you sweat, it is important to put fluid back in your body. Dehydration can be a serious condition if we ignore the signs. It can make you feel tired, shaky and cranky. Keep in mind that you might be sweating even though you can't see it. For example, you can sweat and become dehydrated when you swim, but you may not think you are sweating in the water.

Once you are thirsty you have already become dehydrated so start drinking some fluids right away. This will replace the fluids lost and you'll avoid the feelings of sickness.

So what kind of fluid do I need?

Sports drinks can be helpful for certain types of activity such as a soccer game or a long hike, but the best choice for most physical activities is plain old water. If you are active for less than 60 minutes water should be all you need to hydrate yourself. It is important to have water handy *before*, *during* and *after* you are physically active.



The amount of water you need is usually measured in ounces. It might be easier to count your gulps. One gulp of water is about one ounce.



Follow these tips for getting the **RIGHT AMOUNT** of water for activity:

- About two hours *before* you are going to be active drink about 16 gulps.
- Every 15 to 20 minutes *during* your activity drink about 10 gulps.
- *After* activity keep drinking. Try to get in about 24 gulps.

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Sports drinks do serve a purpose. If you are really active for 60 minutes or more like during a sport, or in hot weather you are probably sweating more and becoming more dehydrated. Along with the fluid lost in sweat we can also lose electrolytes. These are minerals that keep the cells of the body functioning correctly like the nerve and muscle cells.

Sports drinks contain electrolytes (*i-lek-tra-lights*) like sodium and potassium. When we drink them, they can replace these electrolytes that are lost in our sweat. Sports drinks can contain sugar and calories so they aren't the best choice when you aren't active, but they can help your body when you are working hard at a physical activity for 60 minutes or more.



Sports Drinks & Physical Activity

Find the hidden words within the grid of letters.

Contact your local County Extension Agent for the puzzle's solution!

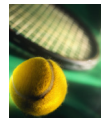
Sources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *BAM! Body and Mind, Keep Your Cool*. Available online at http://www.bam.gov/sub_yoursafety/yoursafety_keepingyourcool.html
- American College of Sports Medicine Position Statement on Exercise and Fluid Replacement. *Med Sci Sports Exerc*. Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. i-vii, 1996. <http://www.acsm-msse.org/pt/pt-core/template-journal/msse/media/0196.htm>

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| before | electrolytes | ounces | sodium | thirsty |
| dehydration | fluid | physical activity | sports drinks | water |



Special Thanks to the following reviewers:

- Aaron Beigle, PhD.**
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