

Staying Hydrated



PREPARE // PERFORM // RECOVER // REPEAT

Good hydration is key to maximizing your strengths in any game. Your body needs water to maintain peak performance, especially in conditions like heat, humidity, cold, and high altitude.

How to hydrate

Good rule of thumb: Drink water consistently all day. If you feel thirsty, or if you notice your urine is dark in color like apple juice, drink more. Carrying a reusable water bottle with you is a helpful way to always have some on hand. But when it comes to high-intensity play, hydrating like a champ calls for planning ahead.

- Bump up your fluid intake about four hours before practice or competition.
- Rehydrate about every 15 to 30 minutes during play. If you know you won't get a chance, pre-game hydration is especially important.
- For early morning games, start increasing hydration the day before.
- Use a sports drink after the game to replace not just fluids, but electrolytes, protein, and carbohydrates. Low-fat chocolate milk is a great option.



What to drink

For practice or competition lasting less than one hour, water is king. For intense activity, or activity that lasts more than an hour, a sports drink can fuel working muscles and replace electrolytes lost through sweat. Look for sports drinks with four main ingredients: water, carbohydrates (such as sucrose and dextrose), sodium, and potassium.

What not to drink

Steer clear of “enhanced” waters, coconut water, and pediatric rehydration products like Pedialyte. Sports drinks like Gatorade are calibrated to replenish a balance of fluids, carbohydrates, and electrolytes. These drinks aren't.

Definitely avoid energy drinks.

What's so bad about energy drinks?

Energy drinks can contain up to 400mg of caffeine per serving — that's equivalent to about four cups of coffee or 11 sodas. A barrage of caffeine plus other “energy boosting” ingredients equals bad news for the growing body, especially athletes: sleep disturbance, increased blood pressure and heart rate, anxiety, irritability, and vomiting just to start. Even worse, energy drinks have been linked to seizures, cardiac events, and even death.

A quick boost of energy is not worth putting your health on the line!



Sample hydration plan for an average-sized 15-year-old soccer player:

4 Hours
before game

10 oz of water

2 Hours
before game

6 oz of water

During Game

20 oz of sports drink
in four 5-oz servings

After Game

8 oz of water or low-fat chocolate milk

Energy Drink vs. Sports Drink

What's the difference?



Energy drinks contain:

- sugar
- caffeine
- plant extracts, such as guarana
- herbs, such as ginseng
- amino acids
- vitamins
- antioxidants, sometimes in mega-dose quantities

They are:

- considered “dietary supplements”
- not FDA approved*



Sports drinks contain:

- sugar
- electrolytes

They are:

- categorized as “food” by the FDA, meaning strict laws apply to their labeling

*The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not regulate the amount of caffeine and other stimulants in energy drinks.

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