

# Hydration

## ***Hey! It's Important***

When you hear the word, “Dehydration” you might think of a marathon runner collapsing just before the finish line or a football player cramping up in the final two minutes of a game. However, you may be dehydrated as you read this column this very minute! Even slight dehydration, as little as a 1% drop in body fluids can impair both mental and physical performances. A lack of fluid can slow blood flow to the brain. This can result in a lack of focus and mental clarity. It can also lead to a lack of coordination and, heat related illness (heat exhaustion)

## ***How do I know if I'm dehydrated***

Slight dehydration is hard to pick up on. In past, many thought that urine color was a good way to tell if it was clear, you were well hydrated. Science has shown that isn't the best way. Too many things play into that. The best thing you can do is take preventative action!

## ***Fluid replacement***

It is important to replace lost fluids from day to day living. Many people think because they are not sweating, they won't get dehydrated. That isn't true. Think of your body as a hairy protein bag full of water. The problem is this bag has holes in it – Billions of holes! Your mouth, eyes, ears and all of the pores on your skin let water out. In fact we lose about 72 oz of water by just being alive. That is about 8 or 9 glasses or 4 bottles of water. Make sure you drink at least that much water every day, and even more if you are active or exercise a lot.

You don't actually “lose weight” during exercise, you lose fluids. Drink enough water to get your weight back to where it was before you started. 16 oz for every pound lost or 8oz every 15 min.

## **Sports drinks**

So what's the big deal about sports drinks? Are they really that much better than water? Here is the skinny on sports drinks. For one they are flavored, so we naturally want to drink more right from the get go. They also contain carbohydrates and sodium which also make us want to drink more. Our bodies also soak up these sports drink formulations a lot faster than water. So yes, they are better at keeping us hydrated and re-hydrating us during the day. However, they contain a lot more calories than water, so if you are not in an actual sport related event or training, stick to water.

## **What about caffeine?**

Caffeine makes you “have to go”, so doctors thought that it would dehydrate you faster than water. Recently we have discovered that drinking 16 oz of a caffeinated drink doesn’t make you “have to go” any more than 16 oz of water. So you can enjoy your favorite drinks from time to time. But be careful, many caffeinated drinks have a lot of calories and sugar that will quickly pack on unwanted pounds.

## **Can you drink too much water?**

In short – yes. Too much water too fast can result in a condition known as Hyponatremia, which is water poisoning - Too much water and not enough of those things they call electrolytes, and your body is thrown out of balance and just can’t function properly anymore.