

Hydration

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Every year a number of tragedies occur relating to Heat Stroke and dehydration. Proper hydration as well as recognizing and preventing heat illness are very important topics for all coaches to understand.

Athletes, young and old, increase their risk of heat illness as they become dehydrated. According to the National Athletic Trainers' Association, it is not uncommon to reach dehydration levels significant enough to place athletes at risk of developing heat illness in as little as an hour of exercise. Athletes can reach this level even more rapidly if they begin the workout, practice or competition **ALREADY DEHYDRATED**. It is quite common for many young players to arrive at practice already dehydrated. A full day at school, running around at recess, gym class, not eating or drinking properly through out the day will all contribute to a child being dehydrated before practice even starts!

A Good Strategy for Proper Hydration

- PreHydrate - Before practice or game
- Hydrate - Throughout the practice or game
- ReHydrate - After the practice or game

PREHYDRATE

- Players should drink 16 oz of fluid first thing in the morning of a practice or game.
- Players should consume 8-16 oz of fluid one hour prior to the start of the practice or game.
- Players should consume 8-16 oz of fluid 20 minutes prior to the start of the practice or game.

HYDRATE

- Players should have unlimited access to fluids (sports drinks and water) throughout the game or workout.
- Players should drink during the practice or game to minimize losses in body weight but should not over drink.
- **ALL PLAYERS** should consume fluids during "water breaks". Many players will say that they are not thirsty; however, in many cases by the time they realize that they are thirsty they are already dehydrated or on their way to be dehydrated. Make sure all your players are getting the proper fluids.

REHYDRATE

- Parents or Coaches should weigh players before and after practice. For each pound lost during the workout, an athlete should consume at least 24 oz of fluid. If this recommended amount of fluid is not consumed, the player must replace 80% of lost weight by next practice to avoid dehydration.
- Players/Parents should check the color of a player's urine. If it is a dark, gold color (like apple juice) the player is already slightly dehydrated. If it is very pale yellow (like lemonade) then he is on the way to being hydrated.

Other Hydration Tips

- Avoid carbonated drinks. They can cause bloating and may decrease the amount of fluid consumed.
- Avoid caffeinated beverages and alcohol as they cause the body to lose body fluids.
- Fluid containing carbohydrate and small amounts of sodium chloride are likely to have more beneficial effects than plain water.
- Allow for acclimation - Acclimation is the body's adaptation to a hot environment. Slowly increase practice intensity and duration over the first two weeks of training. Most cases of heat illness occur in the first 2 to 3 days of training.
- Drink it. Don't pour it - A player pouring fluid over his/her head may feel great but won't help restore body fluids or lower body temperature.
- Exercise in the morning or evening - This is when the weather is coolest. Also, avoid the direct sun to minimize radiant heat from the sun and hot playing surfaces.
- Dress for the weather - Keeping cool in hot weather means wearing fewer clothes and frequently removing gear like helmets during breaks.

Ways to Recognize the Early Warning Signs of Dehydration

These can include but are not limited to:

- Loss of Energy " Dizziness
- Loss of Coordination
- Cramps
- Headaches
- Above Normal Levels of Fatigue
- Dark Yellow Urine

1. Casa, DJ. et al. J. Athl Train 35:212-224, 2000. 2. Below PR et al. Med. Sci. Sports Exerc. 27: 200-210, 1995. 3. Murray R et al. Med. Sci. Sports Exerc. 27: 1057-1062, 1995. 4. Fritzsche, R.G. et al. J. Appl. Physiol. 88: 730-737, 2000. 5. Davis, J.M. et al Int. J. Sport Nutr. Exerc: Metab. 10: 476-485, 2000. 6. Passe, D.H. et al. Appetite 35: 219-229, 2000. 7. Wilk, B. and O. Bar-Or. J. Appl. Physiol. 80:1112-1117, 1996.

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