

Water
US Youth Soccer Blog
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Water - 75% of Americans are chronically dehydrated. {This likely applies to half the world's population.} In 37% of Americans, the thirst mechanism is so weak that it is often mistaken for hunger. One glass of water shuts down midnight hunger pangs for almost 100% of the dieters studied in a University of Washington study. A lack of water is the number one trigger of daytime fatigue. Preliminary research indicates that eight to ten glasses of water a day could significantly ease back and joint pain for up to 80% of sufferers. Drinking five glasses of water daily decreases the risk of colon cancer by 45%, plus it can slash the risk of breast cancer by 79%, and one is 50% less likely to develop bladder cancer. Water also transports nutrients, oxygen and waste products throughout the circulatory system and is necessary for bodily functions. Everyone should drink at least six to eight glasses of fluids daily.

Fluids are an extremely important part of a soccer player's diet. You need fluids to regulate your body temperature and prevent over-heating. Drinking more fluids rather than fewer can help prevent over-heating. Fluids can include water, juices, or sports drinks. If large amounts of sweat are lost during soccer training and competition, you may become dehydrated which can cause poor performance and increase your risk of heat-related illness. By the time you're thirsty, you've already lost important fluids and electrolytes and might be dehydrated. So remember to stick to the golden rule – drink before, during and after activities. Drinks with caffeine are diuretics and cause the body to excrete fluids rapidly.

Coaches should never deny a request for water. Replacing lost fluids is critical. Cold water is best. The body absorbs cold fluids FASTER than ones at room temperature. A fluid's sugar content and volume also affect how quickly it is absorbed. When it is your turn to bring drinks to the match bring 10-K, Quick-Kick, Gatorade or other drinks that will replace the electrolytes in the body. Do not give your players salt tablets. Replacing fluids, not salt is important. Even if the weather is cool, your players will need plenty of fluids to ward off the chances of dehydration. Bring water to all outdoor activities year round to insure a happy, healthy and active year for your players.

Even *mild* dehydration will slow down one's metabolism as much as 3%. A mere 2% drop in body water can trigger fuzzy short-term memory, trouble with basic tactics, and difficulty focusing on the match or on ball skills. A 1% loss of water from the body causes a 10% drop in performance levels. Soccer players should drink fluids before, during, and following training and competition to reduce dehydration. Frequent urination is a better sign than thirst that you have had enough to drink.

When you play soccer you work up a sweat! That means you're going to lose fluids fast. Research shows that if you put those fluids back, you feel re-energized and can keep playing. Remember these guidelines when preparing to play. Based on your size, you may need to drink more—but always drink until you're satisfied—and remember to take a few extra gulps for added power.

Before a match: 4 to 8 ounces

During a match: 4 ounces every 15 to 20 minutes

After a match: 16 ounces

Drink plenty of fluids like Gatorade and water the night before and the morning of the match to keep well hydrated. The faster your body can soak up fluids, the quicker you will be re-energized and back in the match! Research shows that a sports drink like Gatorade puts back the fluids and electrolytes you lose during training or play. Consumption of fluids or foods containing moderate levels of carbohydrate and salt will help you recover from training and/or competition.

A simple way to determine how much fluid to drink is to weigh yourself before and after a workout or match to find out your ""sweat rate."" The weight loss will be almost entirely the amount of fluids that should be replaced. Drink at least 16 ounces for every pound you lose during activity. Also take the pinch test. Put your hand in front of you (palms down) and pinch the skin on the back of your knuckles. If you are well hydrated, the skin should snap back when you let go. If it stays pinched for several seconds, you may need fluids.