



## Sports drinks? Energy drinks? Water?

### Keeping hydrated can be tough... by Brandie Adams, SIRC

Hot and humid characterize summer in Ottawa. This can make it tough to stay hydrated – especially while playing sports. Choosing what to drink can be difficult. Is water enough? Are sports drinks healthy? What exactly ARE energy drinks?



Most of the body is made up of water. For muscles to work properly water, electrolytes and glycogen (carbohydrates) are needed. A general rule of thumb is that when you are thirsty dehydration has already occurred. This can be problematic when playing sports because only 1-2% dehydration can cause a drop in performance.

Deciding what to drink can be mind boggling. For activities that are low impact or last less than one hour, water is often all you need. The goal at this point is to replace what is being sweat out. Sports drinks come into play for longer activities. Sports drinks contain water, sodium and carbohydrates that give the body energy.

For parents that are concerned about giving their child sports drinks there is generally no need. Sports drinks often contain less sugar than fruit juice however if calories are a concern diluting it with water is an option. If cost is a concern you could make your own. One recipe

#### HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE DEHYDRATED? COMMON SIGNS INCLUDE:

- Increase in heart rate
- Increase in body temperature
- Nausea
- Fainting
- Vomiting
- Difficulty with exercise
- Muscle cramping
- Heat illness
- Heat stroke
- Diarrhea

is as simple as combining one-litre of water, one-litre of orange juice and half a teaspoon of table salt.

Be wary of energy drinks! They are not the same as sports drinks and can contain as much caffeine as one cup of coffee (or more). Energy drinks are a stimulant and provide a short burst of energy. Giving youth energy drinks can have negative side effects including poor sleep, bed-wetting and anxiety.

For parents and coaches it is important to know that youth are at a higher risk for dehydration. They have a more difficult time regulating their body temperature, especially in heat and humidity. So make sure that you remind them to stay hydrated!



For more information on coaching and injury prevention visit the SIRC Sport Library at [www.sirc.ca](http://www.sirc.ca)

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#### Resources:

- Allsopp, S., *Sports and energy drinks for children: sorting fact from fiction*. Sports Coach, 28(1) 2005, pp. 6-7.  
Cort, M. *Are you drinking up this summer?* Modern Athlete & Coach. 45(1) Jan. 2007, pp. 15-16.  
Hamilton, A. *Sports drinks*. Ultra-fit. 15(6) 2005, pp. 84-85.  
Lambert, M. R., et al. *Get the Splash on Fluids for Youth Athletes*. VAHPERD. Fall 2006, pp. 16-17  
Shirreffs, S.M. et al. *Water and electrolyte needs for football training and match-play*. Journal of Sports Science, 24(7) July 2006, pp.699-707.