

# Fueling for Performance

# Hydration



**Boston Children's Hospital**

Orthopedics & Sports Medicine

[bostonchildrens.org/sportsmed](http://bostonchildrens.org/sportsmed)  
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Staying hydrated is one of the easiest things you can do as an athlete to perform your best.

Be sure to drink plenty of fluids before, during and after practice or during competition. Losing too much body weight through sweat—as little as 2 percent in adults or 1 percent in children—can slow you down and have a negative impact on your health.

## What to look out for

### Signs of dehydration

- feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- rapid heartbeat
- dry skin
- cramping
- increased body temperature
- feeling sleepy or irritable

### Signs of overhydration

- bloated stomach
- nausea
- vomiting
- feeling confused or disoriented

## How to time your hydration for practices and competitions

### Before exercise

- Drink 17 to 20 ounces 2 to 3 hours before you exercise.
- Drink another 7 to 10 ounces 10 to 20 minutes before exercise.

### During exercise

- Drink 3 to 8 ounces every 15 to 20 minutes, depending on how much you sweat, your age, the heat and intensity of your workout. A sports dietitian can help determine your sweat rate and individual fluid needs.

### After exercise

- Drink at least 8 to 10 ounces within 30 minutes after your workout.

## Strategies for staying hydrated

- Carry a reusable water bottle.
- Use a smartphone app to remind you to hydrate. Two of our favorites are Plant Nanny and Drink Water Aquarium.
- Add lemon, lime or fruit slices to water for flavor.



## What you should know about sports drinks

Sports drinks help replenish electrolytes and provide easily digestible carbohydrates for energy. But often, water is the best way to stay hydrated.

Sports drinks are helpful in the following conditions:

- when exercising for an hour or longer
- in extreme weather conditions
- if your sweat is very salty

The easiest way to see if you're hydrated is by checking your urine color. Pale yellow means you're hydrated.



HYDRATED

DEHYDRATED



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This piece is part of an informational series on sports injury prevention produced by the Orthopedics and Sports Medicine Center at Boston Children's. For materials on preventing injuries in other sports, call **617-355-3501** or visit [bostonchildrens.org/sportsmed](http://bostonchildrens.org/sportsmed).

**Boston Children's offers Sports Medicine care at locations in Boston, Lexington, Peabody, Waltham and Weymouth.**