



HYDRATION FOR YOUNG ATHLETES

HYDRATION FOR PERFORMANCE

How much they need, how to tell if they're drinking enough, and the warning signs of dehydration.

Kids and teens can get overheated more quickly than adults, sweat less and later, and often don't realize they're thirsty until they've already lost fluids. That's why it's important for young athletes to have a hydration strategy.

01 | DAILY FLUID BASICS

RECOMMENDED DAILY HYDRATION NEEDED

AGE	TYPICAL DAILY FLUID TARGET*	ABOUT
9-13 YRS	~56 OZ - 64 OZ / DAY	7-8 CUPS
14-18 YRS	~64 OZ - 88 OZ / DAY	8-11 CUPS

02 | BEFORE, DURING & AFTER ACTIVITY

All drinks count toward hydration & fluid goals, even your chocolate milk post recovery beverage!

WHEN	WHAT TO OFFER
2-4 HRS BEFORE	2-4 hours before >10-16 oz of water.
15 MINUTES BEFORE	15 minutes before, 8 oz of water.
DURING ACTIVITY	~3-8 oz every 15-20 minutes for 9-12 year olds and up to ~ 34-50 oz per hour for adolescent boys & girls. Water is fine for most practices under an hour; save sports drinks for long, hot, or high-intensity sessions.
AFTER ACTIVITY	Age 1-12: Rehydrate immediately with water or milk. If significant sweat loss occurs, include a salty snack to help with fluid retention. Age 13-18: If your child is tracking their sweat loss, encourage your child to drink 16-24 oz for every pound of body weight lost during exercise and to consume that over the next few hours.



THE BOTTOM LINE

Kids often don't feel thirsty until they're already behind on fluids.

Build hydration into the daily routine instead of waiting for thirst.



GOT MORE QUESTIONS OR IDEAS?
Connect with nutrition experts today.



FUEL YOUR GAME

SPOTTING TROUBLE EARLY



03 | THE URINE COLOR CHART



1-2 HYDRATED

- Pale, odorless, and plentiful.

3-4 MILDLY DEHYDRATED

- Slightly darker yellow.

5-6 DEHYDRATED

- Medium-dark yellow.

7-8 VERY DEHYDRATED

- Dark and strong-smelling.



04 | SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF DEHYDRATION

MILD – MODERATE // REST, SHADE, FLUIDS

- Thirst and dry or sticky mouth
- Headache
- Dark, low-volume urine
- Fatigue or unusual sluggishness
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Nausea
- Muscle cramps
- Irritability or a sudden mood change

SEVERE // STOP, SEEK MEDICAL CARE

- No urination for 8+ hours, or very dark urine
- Sunken eyes, no tears when crying
- Rapid heartbeat or rapid breathing
- Confusion or trouble staying alert
- Extreme fatigue, or the athlete stops sweating in the heat
- Fainting or inability to stand



05 | QUICK TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Make drinking water part of the daily routine. Offer it with meals, in the car, playing at home, and during homework, etc
- Send them to school & practice with their own labeled bottle, and refill it, kids often won't ask for more.
- Check morning urine color as a quick daily habit, especially during a heavy training week.
- Don't rely on thirst alone. Most people don't feel thirsty until they've already lost noticeable fluid, and kids notice thirst even later than adults.
- Save sports drinks for long (60+ min), intense, or hot and humid sessions. For most practices, water is enough.
- If your athlete is a "salty sweater" (you see white salt marks on their clothes), a salty snack with a chocolate milk after practice helps replace what was lost.



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