
Maintaining Hydration

Heat-related illness is preventable. One of the methods is to stay hydrated. Proper hydration should occur not only during exercise, but before and after.

Approximately 24 hours prior to exercise, individuals (10+ years old) should begin drinking adequate amounts of fluid to promote adequate hydration. The American College of Sports Medicine's 1996 Position Stand, "Exercise and Fluid Replacement" and the Gatorade Sport Science Institute (1997) generally recommend the following: (35, 36)

- Drink at least 20oz two hours before exercise
- Drink 8 oz. 15 minutes before exercise
- Drink 4-8 oz. every 15 minutes during exercise to replace sweat
- Drink 24 oz. for every 1lb of body weight deficit post-activity
- Overall, an individual should drink 10-12 cups (80-96 oz) daily

The thirst response is not a good indicator for re-hydration. In fact, by the time the thirst response is initiated, the need for fluid replacement has become crucial. At this point, an individual has lost essential fluid and electrolytes and is moving toward dehydration. Youth sport participants typically underestimate the amount of fluid they need. In 2006, following a three-year study at the University of Connecticut, it was reported that almost two-thirds of youth soccer players were dehydrated before practice started. This study compelled the US Soccer Federation to develop youth hydration guidelines for coaches and parents.

