

Highlands Performance Volleyball Nutrition: Jennifer Egeland, MS, RND, LD

Hydrate Right: Proper hydration is one of the most important aspects of healthy physical activity. Drinking the right amount of fluids before, during and after every physical activity is vital to providing your body the fluids it needs to perform properly.

Hydration Goal: The overall goal is to minimize dehydration without over-drinking. Adequate hydration varies among individuals. Practical ways to monitor hydration are:

Urine color: The color of the first morning's urine void after awakening is an overall indicator of hydration status. Straw or lemonade colored urine is a sign of appropriate hydration. Dark colored urine, the color of apple juice, indicates dehydration. Dark urine is often produced soon after consuming vitamin supplements.

Sweat loss: Change in body weight before and after exercise is used to estimate sweat loss. Since an athlete's sweat loss during exercise is an indicator of hydration status, athletes are advised to follow customized fluid replacement plans that consider thirst, urine color, fluid intake, sweat loss and body weight changes that occur during exercise.

Minimize Dehydration: Dehydration results when athletes fail to adequately replace fluid lost through sweating. Since dehydration that exceeds two percent body weight loss harms exercise performance, athletes are advised to begin exercise well hydrated, minimize dehydration during exercise and replace fluid losses after exercise.

Be alert for conditions that increase your fluid loss through sweat:

- Air Temperature: The higher the temperature, the greater your sweat losses.
- Intensity: The harder you work out, the more you perspire.
- Body Size and Gender: Larger people sweat more. Men generally sweat more than women.
- Duration: The longer the workout, the more fluid loss.
- Fitness. Well-trained athletes perspire more than less fit people. Why? Athletes cool their bodies through sweat more efficiently than most people because their bodies are used to the extra stress. Thus, fluid needs are higher for highly trained athletes than for less fit individuals.

Warning Signs: Know the signs of dehydration. Early signs are: •Thirst •Flushed skin •Premature fatigue

•Increased body temperature •Faster breathing and pulse rate

•Increased perception of effort •Decreased exercise capacity

Later signs include: •Dizziness •Increased weakness •Labored breathing with exercise

Fluid Replacement: Replace fluids during exercise to promote adequate hydration. Drink water rather than pouring it over your head. Drinking is the only way to rehydrate and cool your body from the inside out. Rehydrate after exercise by drinking enough fluid to replace fluid losses during exercise

Whether you drink water or sports drink is a matter of choice. However, if your workout or event lasts for more than 90 minutes, you may benefit from the carbohydrates provided by sports drinks. A sports drink that contains 15-18 grams of carbohydrate in every 8 ounces of fluid should be used. Drinks with an higher carbohydrate content will delay the absorption of water and may cause dehydration, cramps, nausea or diarrhea. There are a variety of sports drinks on the market. Be sure to experiment with sports drinks during practice instead of trying them for the first time the day of an event.