

SPORTS MEDICINE

Handbook



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Pre-exercise Hydration

Maintaining Hydration During Exercise



PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

Sports drinks and energy drinks are commonly seen in advertisements and differ in their ingredients. A sports drink is designed to provide re-hydration during or after an athletic activity. Most sports drinks contain six to eight percent carbohydrate solution and are a good source of electrolytes. Carbohydrate and electrolyte concentrations are formulated to allow the body's gastrointestinal tract to absorb the fluid as efficiently as possible.

Sports drinks can provide water, energy and appropriate electrolytes during competition. A carbohydrate concentration of six to eight percent can provide energy, while the higher concentration of carbohydrates found in juices and energy drinks will produce slow emptying of the stomach and may leave the athlete feeling bloated. The lower concentration of sodium found in sports drinks may also help avoid abdominal cramping. While sports drinks provide some benefits during exercise (Table 18), the main focus of an athlete's hydration protocol should be on water. With an adequate diet and water intake, athletes will be properly prepared for practice and competition.

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