

Sports Drinks

Why Do Some Athletes Need Sports Drinks?

Sports drinks are designed to replace fluid and electrolytes (sodium and potassium) that the body loses in sweat. Sports drinks also provide carbohydrate to supply energy to the muscles and the brain during long periods of intense activity.

When Do Athletes Need Sports Drinks?

Active people only need to consume sports drinks during intense activity that causes them to sweat a lot for more than an hour. Water is the best choice for events that last less than an hour or involve only moderate levels of activity.

Which Athletes Need Sports Drinks?

Sports drinks can help athletes who:

- sweat a lot while training or competing very hard for more than one hour
- compete or train in a hot and humid climate
- get dehydrated from sweating when they wear thick sports gear (such as hockey and football)

Examples of intense activity include; triathalons, marathons, and long distance running, biking or cross country skiing.

Can Athletes Make Their Own Sports Drink?

Yes! Here is a simple recipe for a sports drink:

Homemade Citrus Sports Drink

Yield: 500 mL (2 cups)

2 Tbsp	sugar	30 mL
1/8 tsp	salt	0.5 mL
2 Tbsp	boiling water	30 mL
2 Tbsp	orange juice	30 mL
1 Tbsp	lemon juice	15 mL
1 3/4 cup	cold water	425 mL

Combine the sugar and salt in a bowl or pitcher. Add boiling water to the salt and sugar mixture and stir until sugar and salt dissolve. Stir in remaining ingredients and chill in fridge until needed.

Tip: Other unsweetened fruit juices can be used instead of orange juice.

*Nutrition information per 250 mL/1 cup: 58 calories, 0 g fat, 155 mg sodium, 42 mg potassium, 15 g carbohydrate, 15 g sugars, 0 g fibre, 0 g protein.

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What Nutrients Should Sports Drinks Provide?

GOAL	8–20 g Carbohydrate per 250 mL	115–173 mg Sodium per 250 mL	19–49 mg Potassium per 250 mL	No Caffeine, Sugar substitutes or Natural Health Products	No Carbonation
Sports Drink	8–20	100-210 (check the label)	15-100 (check the label)	No (check the label)	No
Water	0	5	0	No	No
Energy Drink	27–30 Too high	Varies Too low or too high	Varies Too low or too high	Contains caffeine; may have sugar substitutes or natural health products	Sometimes
Vitamin Fortified Water	13–14	0–13 Too low	0–875 Too low or too high	Sometimes May contain caffeine, sugar substitutes or natural health products	Sometimes
Flavoured Water	13–14	0–13 Too low	0–875 Too low or too high	Sometimes May contain caffeine, sugar substitutes or natural health products	Sometimes
Soft Drink	22–32 Too high	10–53 Too low	3–15 Too low	Sometimes May contain caffeine or sugar substitutes	Yes
Fruit Juice	24–36 Too high	2–14 Too low	2–68 Too low or too high	No	No
Unflavoured Coconut Water	9	2–266 Too low or too high	634 Too high	No	No