

# Hydration for the Teen Athlete

## Athlete Scenerio

*Ever since football practice started in August, I've been getting headaches, feeling tired, and having trouble paying attention in class. I've been thirsty during the day, so I drink juice or soda at meals and stop at the water fountain on my way to class. During practice, I drink a 20-oz sports drink and, occasionally, I drink water from the cooler. Am I getting enough fluids? How much and when I should be drinking?*

## Goals of performance hydration:

- Begin exercise well-hydrated and hydrate within the hour before practice or games.
- Minimize fluid loss during exercise and avoid excessive dehydration (>2% loss of body weight). Dehydration negatively affects athletic performance, causes early fatigue, electrolyte imbalance and may alter attention and decision-making on the field.
- After exercise, replace sweat losses as soon as possible.

## Strategies to help you stay hydrated on and off the field

- Drink according to thirst during the day and include fluids with meals.
- Develop and follow a personal hydration plan to avoid excessive dehydration.
- Drink 8-20 oz. of fluid (water or sports drink) an hour before exercise.
- Continue drinking during exercise, up to 16-24 oz. of fluid per hour (4 to 6 oz. every 15 minutes).
- Track your sweat loss by weighing yourself before and after exercise. Drink 16-24 oz. of fluid for every pound lost through sweat.
- Use water to hydrate if exercising under an hour; consider a sports drink to replace fluid and electrolytes lost in sweat if exercising over an hour or if you are a salty sweater.

## Tips to Take With You

1. Check your urine color—clear to light yellow usually indicates adequate hydration.
2. Drink frequently during exercise by following your personal hydration plan. One gulp equals about an ounce of fluid.
3. A sports RD (registered dietitian) can help you develop a personalized hydration strategy.

## Contact SCAN

[www.scandpg.org](http://www.scandpg.org)  
800.249.2875

Written by SCAN registered dietitians (RDs) to provide nutrition guidance. The key to optimal meal planning is individualization. Contact a SCAN RD for personalized nutrition plans. Access "Find a SCAN RD" at [www.scandpg.org](http://www.scandpg.org) or by phone at 800.249.2875.

