

The Scoop on Coconut Water

With the warmer weather upon us, many of us will participate in outdoor leisure activities that make us work up a thirst. It is important to stay hydrated during exercise, as hydration affects our physical performance more than any other nutrient, and is important for preventing heat stroke and heat exhaustion.

Coconut water has recently increased in popularity as a natural sport drink. However, the drink is not cheap, considering we can get water for free! Coconut water is a clear liquid that is found in the centre of immature coconuts. It contains carbohydrate, sodium, and potassium, which are components in popular sports drinks, such as Gatorade. The purpose of carbohydrate in sports drinks is to maintain blood glucose levels, while potassium and sodium are electrolytes lost in sweat.

Due to differences in plant maturity, the amount of carbohydrate, sodium and potassium in coconut tends to vary. Coconut water is low in sodium and high in potassium in relation to the American College of Sports Medicine recommendations for a sports drink. Therefore, it is not suitable as a sole source of rehydration. Despite this fact, keep in mind that not everyone requires a sports drink to rehydrate. See the next page for tips on staying hydrated during exercise.



The American College of Sports Medicine recommends the following sport drink composition for rehydration:

- ✓ Sodium: 460-690 mg/L
- ✓ Potassium: 78-195 mg/L
- ✓ Carbohydrate: 30-60 grams/L

Exercise and Fluid Replacement

- Prior to exercising for prolonged periods in the heat, it is a good idea to weigh yourself before and after your workout.
- **A 1 lb weight loss following a workout represents a 500 mL fluid loss!**
- **BEFORE EXERCISE:** Drink 500 mL of fluids 2 hours prior to exercise
- **DURING EXERCISE:** Drink 150 mL of water every 20 minutes
- **AFTER EXERCISE:** Drink 500 mL of fluid for every 1 lb loss of body weight

When do I Need Nutrition/Sports Drinks during Exercise?

- If you exercise at high to very high intensity for greater than 60 minutes
- If you exercise at a moderate intensity for greater than 90 minutes
- If the weather is hot and humid

Ideas for Nutrition during Exercise

- Consume a product that is **low in protein, fat and fibre**
- Consume **10 grams of carbohydrate every 10 minutes** starting an hour into your event
- **Examples:**
 - 1 L of Gatorade Endurance Formula has 60 grams of carbohydrate, potassium, and sodium
 - 1 PowerBar Gel – Carbohydrate Electrolyte Blend has 28 grams of carbohydrate, sodium and potassium
 - 1.5 cups of pretzels has 45 grams of carbohydrate and sodium
 - 0.5 cups of raisins has 50 grams of carbohydrate and potassium
 - 1 medium bagel has 50 grams of carbohydrate and sodium
 - 1 banana has 30 grams of carbohydrate and potassium

