

TEEN NUTRITION BLUEPRINT

hydration

Water is the basis for all of your organ and body functions. If you are human you need water, without it you die, it's that simple. If you are an athlete, your need for water is even higher.

Make
healthy
choices

Urine color chart

Excellent!

Not bad

Grab a
glass
of water

Grab two
glasses
of water

Dude,
you're
nearly
a raisin

Are You Dehydrated?

For an easy and quick way to monitor your hydration – promise not to laugh? – start checking your pee color every time you go to the bathroom. Seriously. The deeper and darker the yellow color is (orangey is even worse!), the more dehydrated you are. The goal should be almost total clarity....think water with a touch of lemon!

How Much Water Should I Be Drinking?

Drink ten full glasses of water a day to keep your body in peak working condition, and if you are exercising, a portion of this water should be electrolyte-infused. A nice and easy way to calculate your daily water requirements is by taking your body weight and dividing it in half. Whatever that number is, drink between that many ounces and 20 percent more each day. So if you are a 180-pound male athlete, you would want to drink between 90 and 125 ounces of water each day.

Sports Drinks

Gatorade and other sports drinks contain levels of beneficial electrolytes, nutrients, and quick-acting carbs that are important for the active athlete (especially as fatigue really sets in). But they also tend to contain excessive sugar, high fructose corn syrup, artificial colors, glucose and often times too much salt. The electrolytes will definitely help you when you've lost a lot of them through sweat during a tough practice or game. But relying on sports drinks for all your hydration needs may be counterproductive overall.

Plain, Old Water Works Best

Just like with sports drinks, relying on beverages such as juice, soda, and coffee to keep you hydrated isn't the best strategy. Juices, although high in vitamins, are high in sugars, and so is soda. Specialty coffee drinks (think a Starbucks Frappuccino) also pile on the sugars and fats. Plus, soda and coffee have caffeine, which is a diuretic – that means they make you lose water! No one's saying you can't ever have coffee or soda again. Everything in moderation, after all. But don't rely on them to stay hydrated, especially before a game. Plain, old water is your best choice.

Effortless Water Reminder

- Get a 24-ounce bottle of water and four rubber bands. Put the rubber bands around the bottle. Drink the water. Refill the bottle, and remove one rubber band. Repeat until the rubber bands are gone. Presto – 120 ounces of water, and you didn't really have to think about it!

Charge Up

- Get the beneficial electrolytes of sports drinks, without as much of the sugar and salt, by power-charging your water. With your water, mix in half as much Gatorade, Vitamin Water, or PowerAde.

These 'Energy Blasts' Fizzle

- Drinks such as Red Bull and Full Throttle promise energy in a bottle, but they're really just high in sugar. And their caffeine levels are often lower than coffee! Instead of having a blast, you'll likely just crash and burn.