

# What to look for in a sports drink

## 3 More than water

Once you break a sweat, water just isn't enough. Your body needs carbohydrate for energy and to replace the electrolytes you lose through sweat.

## 3 The right level and mix of carbohydrate

Gatorade is a 6% carbohydrate solution (14g per 8 oz), which is a research-confirmed amount to speed fluids and energy to the body. Drinks with 8% carbohydrate (19g/8oz) or greater slow gastric emptying and intestinal fluid absorption<sup>11,16-19</sup> and offer no additional physical performance benefit<sup>3,6,20</sup> over 6% carbohydrate.

The combination of carbohydrates in Gatorade – a scientific mix of sucrose, glucose and fructose – assures rapid fluid delivery. Drinks with only fructose or high levels of fructose should be avoided because they can't be absorbed as fast and can cause digestive distress.<sup>21</sup> Maltodextrins or glucose polymers, whether from rice carbohydrates or other sources, offer no advantage in fluid or energy delivery.

## 3 Sodium and potassium

The sodium and potassium in Gatorade help replace amounts lost in sweat,<sup>11,12</sup> help maintain electrolyte levels in the blood,<sup>13</sup> and stimulate more rapid, complete rehydration than do fluids with little or no electrolytes.<sup>14</sup> Most beverages don't have enough — one reason they are less effective. Potassium should also be replaced in proportion to the amount lost in sweat – look for at least 28mg per 8 oz, the minimum lost in sweat.<sup>12</sup>

## 3 Right taste when you're active

Taste preferences change when you're active. Research has shown that athletes will drink more of a flavored beverage<sup>15</sup> and stay better hydrated than when drinking one without flavor.<sup>22</sup> If a beverage doesn't taste good when you're hot and sweaty, you won't drink enough. Because of this, people often replace only a small portion of their sweat loss.<sup>23</sup>

## 3 Physiology, not FIZZ iology

Forget the fizz. Carbonation can cause bloating and stomachache.<sup>17</sup> It also "burns" the throat, making a drink much more difficult to gulp down.<sup>24</sup>

## 3 NO caffeine

Avoid caffeine when you're active because it acts as a diuretic, leading to increased fluid loss.<sup>14,25</sup>

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