

Sports Drinks Versus Water: Which Hydrates Kids Best?

webmaster, Wednesday 17 July 2013 - 14:12:17

Sports Drinks Versus Water: Which Hydrates Kids Best?

By [Brooke de Lench](#) Reviewed by [Susan Yeargin, Ph.D. ATC](#)

Sports drinks hydrate better than water

A number of studies in recent years have shown that sports drinks re-hydrate kids who are active in the heat better than water. Given a choice, kids will drink a lot more of a sports drink than of a glass of water.

An oft-cited 1999 study in the *Journal of Applied Physiology* reported that drinking a properly formulated sports drink with carbohydrates and [electrolytes](#) (sodium and potassium) increased fluid intake by nearly one-third (32%) compared to water. Because they taste better than water, sports drinks encouraged kids to keep drinking until their fluid needs were met. Another study, from 2003, reported that when drinking water, kids will drink only about 50 percent of what they need. A Canadian study in the 1990's found that a flavored drink containing 6 percent carbohydrates and electrolytes (the amount found in most sports drinks) encouraged kids to drink 91 percent more than water alone.

Sports Drinks Versus Water

Sports Drinks Water

Maintain thirst, so kids keep drinking until fully hydrated Eliminates thirst, so kids stop drinking before they are fully re-hydrated

Contain carbohydrates which provide energy for peak sports performance Contains no carbohydrates, so it does not provide the energy a child needs for running and playing all day

Contain electrolytes (sodium and potassium) which speed rehydration, create thirst, makes them taste better, and prevent heat cramps

Contains no electrolytes and lack the taste appeal of a sports drink

Sports drinks replace electrolytes

[Electrolytes](#) are chemicals in the body fluids that result from the breakdown of salts, including sodium, potassium, magnesium, and chloride, which the body needs to maintain proper amounts of water inside cells, nerve conductivity, and allow for proper response by the cells to outside stimuli. Electrolyte deficits, particularly sodium, can cause lethargy, muscle cramping, and mental confusion, and even seizures. A properly formulated sports drink containing salts, particularly sodium, replaces electrolytes that active children lose through sweat and, because of their taste, promote re-hydration by maintaining thirst and encourage fluid intake.

Read more:

<http://www.momsteam.com/nutrition/sports-hydration/fluid-guidelines/sports-drinks-best-at-keeping-sports-active-kids-hydrated#ixzz2ZJP4XnUX>