

Ready, Set, Drink!

KIDS AND DEHYDRATION

By Shaleek Wilson

12–18 OF FLUID
ounces RECOMMENDED
BEFORE SPORTS
ACTIVITY



READY FOR ACTION?

When temperatures heat up, the risk of children becoming dehydrated intensifies. "Dehydration occurs when an athlete has less body fluid than they need," says Dr. Koutures. "That can be from not getting enough fluid at the start of practice or excessive sweating or vomiting."

If your child plays sports, there are rules coaches and caregivers can enforce to keep them hydrated, healthy and in tip-top performance shape.

TIME OUT

When dehydration sets in, "you're going to see kids not be as energetic," explains Koutures.

Some tell-tale thirsty signs:

- › Decreased attention
- › Stomach ache complaints
- › Vomiting
- › Dropping to one knee

Time out tip: get child in the shade, make sure they are alert, cool them down with ice packs; have them sip small amounts of fluid, if they can.

HAVE A GAME PLAN

Preventing dehydration is all about preparation. "In the days before a sports practice or activity, make sure kids get plenty of fluids and water-rich fruits and veggies, like watermelon and berries," explains Dr. Koutures.

Coaches should also keep an eye on kids who may be at higher dehydration risk, including those who may have just gotten over a cold or are overweight.

Is H₂O Good Enough?

Some kids simply don't like the taste of water. If your child won't drink it, flavored beverages are acceptable. "My favorite recovery drink is chocolate milk," says Dr. Koutures. "It has carbohydrates, protein, vitamin D and calcium." For kids younger than 5, water is best, but drinks like Pedialyte are good, too.

15 THE MAXIMUM
NUMBER OF
MINUTES BETWEEN
WATER BREAKS
DURING PRACTICE

104° TEMPERATURE OF
HIGH FEVER AND
POSSIBLE REACTION
TO DEHYDRATION



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