



Hydration in summer – 6 tips on staying hydrated

In summer, a lot of people get concerned about whether or not to exercise.

“I don’t want to pass out”

“Is it too dangerous to exercise when it is so hot?”

“What if I get dehydrated?”

These are some of the concerns our dietitians hear regularly during the warmer months. Staying hydrated is extremely important all year round, but in the warmer months when our bodies are losing more water and salts through sweat, hydration becomes a bigger focus.

Follow our six tips to stay hydrated in summer when exercising:

Aim to start with an optimal level of hydration before exercising. This might sound like common sense, but many people are not getting enough hydration on a day to day basis. A good guideline is 30-40ml per kg body weight. So, if you weigh 70kg, you need to aim for 2.1-2.8L of fluids a day!

Check your urine. How hydrated you are can be identified by the colour of your urine. Optimally, you should have pale yellow coloured urine – if it is dark, it means you are dehydrated, and if it is clear, it means you aren’t retaining enough fluids – time to up the electrolytes!

Avoid alcohol and caffeine. Alcohol and caffeine make your body lose more fluids. If you’re planning to exercise, try to avoid alcohol leading up to the event, and make sure you have the above two tips covered!

For exercise less than an hour, drink water. Many people will complete a 30-60 minute session at the gym and choose to drink just sports drinks. Whilst this isn’t harmful, it’s not necessary. When you are exercising for short durations (less than an hour), water is sufficient for hydration.

For exercise longer than an hour, add the electrolytes. If you are doing a long event, aim to hydrate with a sports drink that is abundant in electrolytes and has about 6-8% carbohydrates for re-fueling. A good option is Gatorade.

Consider your overall diet, as hydration is only one aspect of it. Do not neglect a well-balanced, nutrient rich diet. For athletes, it is important to consider the amounts of protein, carbohydrates and fats in your diet, especially around training time. Focusing on foods that are nutrient dense ensures that you are getting a lot of micronutrients as well as macros. If you are unsure whether you are eating correctly for your training, speak to a sports dietitian who can assist you.