



**SMARTPLAY**

## **Drink up**

Ever exercised or played sport and suffered a cramp? If you have, you're certainly not alone as they can occur when people are active, as a result of dehydration. Put simply they happen because people do not drink enough fluids before, during and after activity.

When you exercise or play sport your body loses water by sweating. You need to replace this water by drinking fluids (water or a sports drink).

If you don't, you will become dehydrated.

Dehydration reduces your sporting performance whilst increasing your heart rate, body temperature and how hard you perceive exercise to be. You become fatigued and may incur cramps, heat stress or even heat stroke.

So how do you avoid getting dehydrated whilst exercising or playing sport? Simple, by following some advice from Smartplay, Sports Medicine Australia's sports injury prevention program funded by VicHealth and the Department of Planning and Community Development (Sport and Recreation Victoria).

### **How to avoid dehydration**

- Don't wait to feel thirsty, thirst is a poor indicator of fluid needs.
- Cool fluids may be absorbed more rapidly than warmer fluids.
- Avoid starting exercise dehydrated. Drink plenty of fluids for several hours prior to exercise.
- If you do not like the taste of water drink flavoured drinks such as sports drinks and low concentration cordial. Sports drinks comprise carbohydrates and electrolytes. Carbohydrates supply the muscles with fuel during activity and improve flavour, while the main electrolyte is sodium, which promotes optimal fluid absorption and retention. Evidence also shows sports drinks can improve sports performance for longer duration exercise and endurance activity where fuel depletion and large fluid losses are likely.
- If you are well hydrated you should be able to pass a good volume of clear urine in the hour before exercise.



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You should also be aware of how much you need to drink to avoid dehydration.

- Drink at least 500ml (2 cups) an hour before exercise.
- Drink at least 150ml every 15 minutes during exercise.
- During exercise take advantage of all breaks in play to drink up.
- After exercise drink liberally to ensure you are fully re-hydrated.

These practices will ensure you avoid becoming dehydrated whilst active and keep you from injuring yourself. Remember injuries usually mean time on the sideline so prevention, or in this case, keeping hydrated is the key!

For further information on hydration, download the *Smartplay Drink Up Fact Sheet* at [www.smartplay.com.au](http://www.smartplay.com.au) or for hard copies contact Smartplay on phone 03 9674 8777 or email [smartplay@vic.sma.org.au](mailto:smartplay@vic.sma.org.au)