



## Hydration, Hydration, Hydration!

How often have you seen a pro athlete taken out of a game due to cramping? Staying hydrated cannot be stressed enough! It doesn't take long for sweat loss to create an electrolyte imbalance. This is the first step in the progression of heat-related illness. Even if the player isn't competing in overly hot conditions, the rise in body temperature causes muscle groups to be worked to exhaustion, or overexertion. Overexerting muscles can be enough to put that player at risk of injury, cramping or overheating. One remedy that athletes utilize, to prevent exhaustion, is Gatorade. Gatorade is a sports drink that helps restore electrolyte loss. It's not the best solution for dehydration. However, it's better than doing nothing. Gatorade contains only potassium and sodium. This neglects calcium, magnesium and chloride. These are the essential factors in electrolyte loss during sweating. Gatorade also contains artificial colors and flavors that have been derived from chemicals. Per 12-ounce serving, Gatorade offers 21 grams of sugar and dextrose. Competing after consuming too much sugar can cause cramps, an upset stomach, decreased immunity, lack of storing essential minerals and dehydration. In moderation, sports drinks can prevent athletes from dehydration, but you can do better by creating an electrolyte drink at home!

A recipe for a homemade electrolyte drink includes 1 quart water (or green tea),  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp Himalayan salt,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup organic lemon juice, 5 grams ribose powder and Stevia sweetener for taste. Also, it's

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important that you and your athlete should aim to consume at least half of your body weight in ounces of water daily! This will assist in maintaining proper hydration on a day-to-day basis!

**This information can provide a starting point when talking to your doctor about which options might work best for your athlete's individual needs. Starting good habits at a young age will give athletes the best possible chance to stay healthy and succeed both now and in the future!**



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