

WHAT IS THE DAILY RECOMMENDATION FOR SPORT BEVERAGES?

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OVERVIEW

[Sports](#) beverages are designed to improve hydration and recovery related to [exercise](#). While they are convenient ways to supply hydration, energy and proteins, as of 2011 sports beverages do not necessarily enhance performance when compared with foods. There are no official guidelines regarding their consumption. However, their contents can be examined according to nutritional guidelines and incorporated into a routine.

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Sports beverages formulated for exercise contain electrolytes such as [sodium](#) and potassium to improve fluid retention. Non-diet formulas typically provide 15 to 30 grams of carbohydrates per 8 ounces, in the form of sugar, to supply energy. Consumption of electrolytes and carbohydrates are beneficial for exercise sessions lasting more than 60 minutes. Most commercial sports beverages provide sufficient, if not more than necessary, electrolytes and carbohydrates for exercise. You can manipulate your intake by adding sugar, sodium or water to achieve personal needs.

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EXERCISE VS. NON-EXERCISE DAYS

When you exercise, your body requires a disproportionate amount of carbohydrates to fuel the session. In general, 30 to 50 g of carbohydrates per hour of exercise in addition to normal food intakes work well to supply energy. Many people can also require sodium intake to replace the amount lost through sweating. However, due to the large degree of variations in sweat content by age, sex, surrounding temperature and humidity, there is no recommended level of sodium intake for exercise needs. On days you do not exercise, there is no need to consume sports beverages beyond regular food intakes. A balanced diet with plenty of water is best for your health.

DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS 2010

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA, publishes the Dietary Guidelines for Americans that suggests adequate nutritional intake for disease prevention. In the 2010 guidelines, healthy individuals are recommended to consume no more than 10 percent of total calories from added sugars, about 40 to 50 grams – sugars that are not naturally present but added by the manufacturers. Meanwhile, sodium intake was recommended at 1,500 to 2,300 mg daily. If your sports beverage consumption can be fitted within these guidelines on non-exercise days, you may choose to do so.

CALCULATE YOUR NEED

Given that as of 2011 there are no guidelines for sports beverage consumption, you can estimate your personal need on exercise days starting with 25 grams of carbohydrates per hour of exercise. Experiment with increasing or decreasing the amount at 5-gram intervals and note your performance. For sodium, weigh yourself before and after exercise, add the difference to the amount of fluid consumed and urine output during exercise; 1 pound equals 16 ounces – this is your fluid loss. Consume 150 percent of this amount starting two hours before through four hours after exercise to replenish this loss. If not, you may need more sodium.

Consumption of sports beverages is less of a recommendation; rather, it is an option to supply fluid, electrolytes, and carbohydrate needs during exercise.

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[U.S. Department of Agriculture: Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010. January 2010](#)

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