



# Water and Sports Drinks

**Our bodies need water.** Water makes up 60% of body weight. Our lives depend on it. Because the body has no water storage system, water lost during the day must be replaced to maintain healthy functioning. Although water needs vary depending on exercise, climate, and other factors, most adults need 11–16 cups of total water per day.<sup>2</sup> Not getting enough fluid can lead to dehydration, causing headache, fatigue, blood pressure changes, and irregular heart beat.<sup>1</sup>

## Sports drinks are not a healthy choice.

- \* **Water is the healthiest beverage of all, even during and after intensive exercise.**
- \* **No one needs a sports drink for anything less than marathon-level exertion, especially children.** Sports drinks were created for athletes participating in prolonged vigorous activity, such as marathon training and cycling races.<sup>3</sup> For youth who participate in physical activity for less than 3 hours at a time, energy drinks are unnecessary.<sup>3</sup> To replace the liquid water lost during exercise, water is the healthiest choice for adults and children alike.
- \* **Sports drinks contain a lot of sugar.** The typical 32-ounce sports drink has 14 teaspoons of sugar,<sup>4</sup> equivalent to 22 Starburst candies!<sup>5</sup> — adding empty, nutrition-less calories to our diets.
- \* **Sports drinks add salt to an already over-salted diet.** A 32-ounce sports drink has nearly one-third of the recommended daily intake of salt,<sup>4</sup> which is particularly unnecessary because the average American already consumes twice the recommended daily amount of salt.<sup>6</sup>

**Drinking water may help a person lose weight.** For someone who drinks sugar-sweetened beverages,\* switching to water is the simplest step to consuming fewer calories and possibly losing weight.<sup>7</sup>

**Water must be universally available at low cost.** Not all communities provide access to healthy and inexpensive water. For information on ways you can help improve access to water, visit [www.communitywatercenter.org](http://www.communitywatercenter.org).

\* **NOTE:** *Sugar-sweetened beverages refers to all beverages with added sugars including carbonated soft drinks, juice drinks, sports drinks, flavored and enhanced waters, sweetened teas and energy drinks.*

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## REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> Mahan L, Escott-Stump S. *Krause's Food Nutrition and Diet Therapy* 11th ed. Philadelphia: Saunders; 2004.
- <sup>2</sup> Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. *Dietary Reference Intakes: Water, Potassium, Sodium, Chloride, and Sulfate*. Washington, D.C.; 2004. Available at: <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2004/Dietary-Reference-Intakes-Water-Potassium-Sodium-Chloride-and-Sulfate.aspx>.
- <sup>3</sup> Healthy Eating Research. *Consumption of Sports Drinks by Children and Adolescents*. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; 2012. Available at: <http://www.kickthecan.info/files/documents/HERSportsDrinkFINAL6-2012.pdf>.
- <sup>4</sup> Gatorade. *Thirst Quencher: View Label*. Available at: <http://www.gatorade.com/-/gseries?s=gatorade-g>. Accessed: May 22, 2013.
- <sup>5</sup> Wrigley. *Starburst Nutrition and Ingredients*. Available at: <http://www.wrigley.com/global/brands/starburst.aspx-panel-3>. Accessed: May 22, 2013.
- <sup>6</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Americans Consume Too Much Sodium [Salt]*. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/features/dssodium/>. Accessed: May 22, 2013.
- <sup>7</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Water: Meeting Your Daily Fluid Needs*. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/basics/water.html>. Accessed: May 22, 2013.