

## Nighthawk Hydration

Water is important to the body at all times, but especially in warm weather. It keeps the body from overheating. When you exercise, your muscles generate heat. To keep from burning up, your body needs to get rid of that heat. The main way the body discards heat in warm weather is through sweat. As sweat evaporates, it cools the tissues beneath. Lots of sweating reduces the body's water level, and this loss of fluid affects normal bodily functions.

During the summer, early fall, and late spring, high temperatures can be present. It is important to be aware of the dangers of these conditions to prevent heat illnesses such as **heat cramps/exhaustion/stroke**. Measurements are taken as needed to determine the heat index, and precautionary measures are taken to help prevent heat illness during team activities. It is the responsibility of the individual to stay properly hydrated at all times. All Freshman Football Players are required to carry with them at all times, during team functions, water containers that are full of water/Gatorade. During the season players are required to consume water regularly while attending their classes during the day.

### To keep hydrated:

1. Water and "rest" breaks need to be scheduled, preferably at least every 20 minutes on hot days.
2. Athletes must DRINK during these breaks. Should be 7-10 ounces every 15-20 minutes of practice (one "gulp" is equal to about one ounce).
3. Drink even when not thirsty-by the time thirst hits, it's too late.
4. After practice, 20-24 ounces needs to be drunk for each pound of weight lost in sweat.
5. Water is still the best, but sport drinks help to replenish lost electrolytes.
6. Limit fruit juices/sodas and caffeinated drinks. **No** energy drinks before/during a practice/game.

### Signs of dehydration:

1. Thirst (but usually occurs after it's too late)
2. Fatigue
3. Loss of appetite
4. Dark-colored urine
5. Irritability
6. Decrease in performance
7. Muscle cramps
8. Nausea and or vomiting
9. Stomach cramps
10. Headaches

\*\* If an athlete starts to have symptoms, IMMEDIATELY remove them from participation, get them to a cool spot, cool athlete by removing excess clothing and cool with cold water or ice bath, and provide water/etc.

## Beverages: some hydrate, others dehydrate

Some beverages are better than others at preventing dehydration. Water is all you need if you are planning to be active in a low or moderate intensity activity, such as walking, for only an hour or less. If you plan to be exercising longer than that, or if you anticipate being out in the sun for more than a few hours, you may want to hydrate with some kind of sports drink. These replace not only fluid, but also chemicals like sodium and potassium, which are lost through perspiration. Too much or too little sodium and potassium in the body can cause trouble. Muscle cramping may be due to a deficiency of electrolytes, such as sodium and potassium.

Alcoholic and caffeinated beverages, such as coffee, teas, and sodas, are not recommended for optimal hydration. These fluids tend to pull water from the body and promote dehydration. Fruit juice and fruit drinks may have too many carbohydrates, too little sodium, and may upset the stomach. If you're going to drink fruit juices while exercising, you may try diluting them with 50% fruit juice and 50% water first.

Adequate hydration will keep your summer activities safer and much more enjoyable. If you need to increase your fluid intake, keep an extra pitcher of water with fresh lemons, limes, or cucumber in the refrigerator.