

Keep Kids Hydrated-Defeat The Heat!

(Ron Jones, MS, ACSM Health/Fitness Instructor, Corporate Wellcoach)



Summer is here! Our kids are in the pool, families are off to the lake, and kids are outside playing hard-in the heat. Keeping kids hydrated with plenty of fluids (sodas don't count!) is critical not only to sport performance-but also for health to eliminate serious heat exhaustion, heat stroke-or even death. Some latest research shows that about **2/3s of kids are significantly dehydrated before sport practice and that during a typical 4-6 hour practice session those kids NEVER regain normal hydration even though fluids were available.** The key? Drink before, during, and after events and practices!

Hydration is very critical with children for a number of reasons. **Children produce more heat per pound than adults. Even though kids have more heat to get rid of per pound, they don't have the capacity to sweat as much making it more difficult to rid themselves of heat and excessive core temperature.** Kids have a real cooling disadvantage which is even more reason to make absolutely sure they stay hydrated during summer activities. Kids also do not have the behavioral or psychological drive like adults to stop and drink-adults must make sure they STOP and drink on schedule. Surprisingly, even though kids have a decreased capacity to sweat, children can still lose up to a quart of sweat in a two hour period on a hot day putting them in serious danger if they don't replace these fluid volumes!

There are tricks to getting kids to drink. One is offering a "flavored" sport drink like *Gatorade because it tastes better-plus it also provides important electrolytes lost in sweat to maintain a proper fluid balance. Now true-sport drinks are "high calorie" which is NOT good for overweight and obese children; however, if it comes between your kid dehydrating and getting sick or getting some extra calories, I'd recommend going for the sports drink. *(Note: There are new and healthier alternatives to traditional sport drinks now which have all natural ingredients and no high-fructose corn syrup. Electrolyte-only drinks are also available which are low calorie.)

Cool temperature fluids also taste better on hot days which will encourage more drinking and help to reduce inner core temperatures. For extreme "summer" temperatures and moderate to severe humidity, the recommendation is 5-10 minutes of rest and fluid break per 25-30 minutes of activity.

National Association of Athletic Trainers & American Academy of Pediatrics Guidelines for Drinking Volumes

Time	Kids <90 Pounds	Kids >90 Pounds
1 hour before activity	3-6 oz.	6-12 oz.
During Activity (every 25-30 minutes)	3-5 oz.	6-9 oz.
After Activity (replace sweat loss)	Up to 8 oz. of fluid per ½ pound lost	Up to 12 oz. per ½ pound lost

Kids and dehydration is nothing to play around with this summer. A heat stroke will permanently damage the thermoregulatory system of your child. Defeat the heat this summer-be smart and hydrate kids properly and on schedule!

* Ron Jones (7.15.08)

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