

# Faith Christian School Athletics

## Hydration Guidelines

*The Faith Christian School Athletic Department believes that proper hydration is essential and important during exercise. Adequate fluid intake for athletes is crucial for comfort, performance, and safety. Our goal is create awareness of this importance, inform of the risk of dehydration, and keep our athletes safe.*

At some point, we have all heard, “Drink lots of water!” As the weather gets warmer—and in the Southeast gets downright sweltering— competitive sports players encounter a high heat index and hot conditions.

These conditions make athletes targets for dehydration and heat illness. Water is good for us, but too much actually dilutes your body’s sodium levels low enough to increase other medical problems including muscle cramping.

### **So, what is adequate hydration?**

Target a 10- 12 cup training diet base daily either of water or equivalent hydrating beverages.

### **Which beverages are best, and how do they fit into our overall eating plan?**

The sports training diet should be focused on high-energy foods and appropriate hydration, timed appropriately before and after multiple competitions. The following guidelines help develop successful nutrition and hydration practices for players.

Beverages and foods that count toward daily water intake:

- BEST: water, fitness waters, sport beverages, mineral water, and flavored water
- VERY GOOD: 100% fruit juices, lemonade, tomato and vegetable juices, low fat milk
- GOOD: raw fruits and vegetables
- SO-SO: soft drinks (diet soft drinks in moderation), decaffeinated coffee, yogurt
- NOT SO HELPFUL: caffeinated beverages (coffee, tea, soda) and energy drinks act as diuretics and do not count toward water intake

### **Pre-Match Eating and Hydration Guidelines:**

Athletes need to pay special attention to their pre-match meal and beverage choices, as these foods and fluids may need to last for hours during longer match play.

Select pre-match meals and beverages that are:

- familiar and known to settle hunger
- high in carbohydrate to supply energy for muscle reserves, moderate in protein, and low in fat

- quickly and comfortably digested (not too high in fiber or fat); beware that some smoothies and higher protein sports drinks may be too heavy in your gastrointestinal tract before matches

Examples of pre-match meals and beverages rich in carbohydrate and fluids are pasta, sandwiches, fresh fruit, granola bars, higher carbohydrate energy bars, sports drinks and fitness waters.

### **Hydration tips before play:**

- Limit/avoid caffeinated beverages (iced tea, coffee, cola), especially right before and after match play. These do not hydrate as well and act as diuretics
- The night before playing, fill and chill squeeze bottles or sports jugs and bring them to each practice and match. Have a minimum of two liters available courtside.
- Consume enough fluids throughout the day so urine is a light or pale yellow color before starting a match.
- Drink 17 to 20 oz of fluid within two hours pre-match and as close to match time as you can tolerate (for example, on the way to your match pre-hydrate)

### **Fluid Needs during Play:**

Thirst is not an accurate indicator of hydration level. Adequate fluid consumption is a player's best bet for beating dehydration and heat illness. To keep performing at your best, drink 7 to 10 oz of fluid every 15 to 20 minutes.

Favor sports drinks to enhance rehydration. Sports drinks contain carbohydrate and electrolytes, like sodium. Consuming carbohydrate during play has been shown to help players maintain more power and accuracy in serving and groundstrokes in long match play. For example, Gatorade contains 14 g carbohydrate per 8 oz, which is quickly absorbed and used by working muscles. Sodium replacement is also important since a significant amount of sodium can be lost through sweat during play. Recent research also shows that sports players can lose a great deal of sodium during long play in the heat, some male players losing up to 2 grams of sodium in a single session!

### **Post-Match Nutrition:**

Eat foods and drink fluids that replenish muscle energy stores and electrolytes lost in competition. Here are some guidelines to follow:

- Eat or drink carbohydrates as soon as possible, preferably within the first 30 minutes of a match. Begin by drinking a sports drink or fitness water as you walk off the court or field.
- Replace 150 percent of body weight lost in sweat, or at least 20 oz per pound of sweat weight loss, within two hours of a match. A simple way to check this is to check your body weight both before and after a match to note the body weight change.
- Eat a high-carbohydrate meal that also contains a lean protein source within two hours after play to maximize muscle glycogen recovery (rebuild energy stores) and to support protein

synthesis in muscle. Trying a fruit smoothie with protein powder or a sports meal replacement shake at this time can aid with this as well as provide some additional hydration.

- Additionally consider lightly salting foods and consuming beverages that are natural sodium sources such as tomato juice

Top ten ways to enhance your hydration status on the court or field

1. Drink 1 – 2 cups of water-based beverages (water, juice, milk) with every meal and snack. Target a 10 – 12 cup base minimum of these hydrating beverages per day.
2. If you consume caffeinated beverages, alternate non-caffeinated beverages between caffeinated beverages throughout the day
3. Limit caffeinated beverage intake after a certain time of day (for example, 1 pm)
4. Set a reasonable limit on coffee intake (for instance, 1 to 2 cups per day)
5. Substitute decaffeinated tea, soda, or coffee for some of your caffeinated drinks
6. Increase your food group sources of water and better meet your training diet food group needs through increasing vegetable/fruit juice and milk consumption (2 cups of vegetable/fruit juice = minimum 4 vegetables or fruit servings per day; 2 cups milk = minimum dairy intake per day)
7. Try calorie-free fruit flavored waters such as Schweppes or Fruit2O
8. Dilute juices with water
9. Keep a water bottle with you at all times (freeze overnight so it stays cool on hot summer days)