



HYDRATION AND FOOTBALL

HYDRATION FOR FOOTBALL

It is important that you develop a drinking routine that works for you. You should not rely on drinking when you are thirsty as that is an indication of dehydration.

Your body is about 70% water. If you lose 1-5% of body weight through sweating (up to 4.5 kg in hot humid conditions) it will impair your performance. Scientific studies show that a reduction of 1% in body weight can result in 10% reduction in work capacity!

In addition, water loss will also cause mental functions to deteriorate perhaps resulting in you making mistakes and increasing the chances of injury. It is therefore important that any sweat loss is adequately and promptly replaced through fluid intake, whether this is through water or sports drinks. Figure 1 gives a general idea of how increased body water loss reduces performance capacity.



Fig1: Effect of body water loss on performance

PRACTICAL TIP

If you weigh yourself before and after performance it may be useful to evaluate weight loss. For example 1 kg weight loss is equal to 1 litre of water. Thirst is never an adequate indicator of dehydration.

What to Drink

Having sports drinks such as Lucozade Sport may improve performance by slowing the onset of fatigue. This is especially useful if extra-time occurs and when regular matches limit the time available for fully restoring energy stores.

CAUTION!

Never try new drinking strategies on the day of a match.

Pre-match

Firstly, it is important that you are well hydrated before a match and you can start this 1-2 days before. For example, an extra litre of fruit juice or squash may be drunk the day before.

On match day, you should have plenty to drink and drink even when you are not thirsty. Ideally, you should drink around half a pint-1 pint (250-500ml) of fluid 2 hours before kick-off (this should optimise hydration while allowing enough time for any excess fluid to be excreted as urine before the game starts).

During a match

If you need to, you can drink small amounts of water or sports drink at regular intervals.

Half-Time

You don't want to drink too much at half-time but you want to ensure you drink enough to replace some of the lost sweat. 250-500ml of sports drink or water should be enough.

Post-match

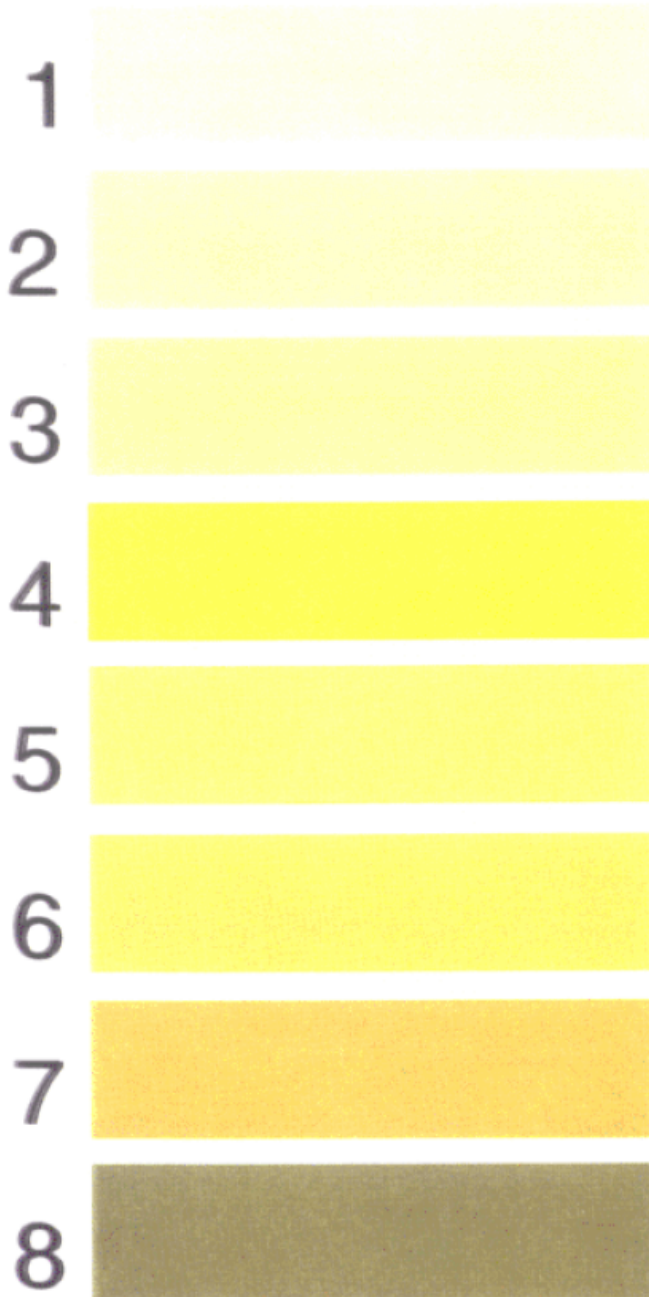
After exercise, the major considerations are to restore carbohydrate and fluid losses. You should immediately drink adequate fluids to replace sweat losses during exercise. This can be a milkshake and banana.

Avoid fizzy drinks because it can cause stomach discomfort.

PRACTICAL TIP

The quicker you start to drink fluids after a match, the quicker you will recover

URINE CHART



This urine color chart is a simple tool you can use to assess if you are drinking enough fluids throughout day to stay hydrated.

If your urine matches the colors numbered **1, 2, or 3 you are hydrated.**

If your urine matches the colors numbered **4 through 8 you are dehydrated** and need to drink for more fluid.

Be Aware! If you are taking single vitamin supplements or a multivitamin supplement, some of the vitamins in the supplements can change the color of your urine for a few hours, making it bright yellow or discolored.

SUMMARY: Practical Tips

1. Drink plenty (e.g. 2-3 pints more than normal) of fluid the day before and on match day.
2. Drink plenty immediately after the game and even for a few hours afterwards. A milkshake is advised
3. Always experiment with drinking habits in training, never on match day.
4. Always drink more than thirst indicates and pay particular attention to fluid replacement in hot humid conditions. If your urine is dark you need to drink more!