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TONING UP? KNOW WHAT'S IN YOUR SPORTS DRINK.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 4.8/5 (5)

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A sports drink rehydrates and helps you recover from workouts, but it also contain calories that could hinder weight loss.

After an intense session at the gym or activity in the sun, reaching for a sports drink seems natural. For this reason, they are widely distributed at sporting carnivals, marathons and even fun runs.

Thanks to great marketing, we know what they promise – hydration and recovery. A 100 Plus Edge can (<http://www.fairprice.com.sg/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/en/fairprice/100-plus-isotonic-canned-drinks---edge-6s-300ml--13009955>), for instance, promises to “hydrate better than water, by quickly replacing fluids, energy and electrolytes lost during sports and active lifestyle”.



So why read the label before knocking back one or a few for good measure?

Aerinlé catches up with two dietitians, Ms Jaclyn Reutens from Aptima Nutrition & Sports Consultants and Mr Theodore Tay from Khoo Teck Puat Hospital in Singapore. Here's their take on four commonly asked questions.

1) Is a sports drink a workout necessity?

Jaclyn: An isotonic sports drink is only essential if the sport is of a medium to high intensity level and lasting longer than 45 minutes. This would include endurance events such as marathons or triathlons.

Theodore: It benefits those taking part in high intensity sports lasting over an hour. Apart from the duration of workout, high sweat rates of 1 litre per hour or more can warrant sports drink consumption.

2) What components should I look out for?

Jaclyn: An isotonic sports drink should contain 6 to 8g of carbohydrate per 100ml. It should also contain electrolytes mainly sodium (70 to 150mg per serving) and potassium (30 to 70mg per serving). This concentration is excellent for rehydration, empties quickly from the stomach and is quickly absorbed from the blood.

Theodore: Sodium is key to preventing muscle cramps as well as fluid retention for hydration. It should contain between 460 to 690 mg of sodium per litre (about 138mg to 207mg per serving).

Glucose, as a simple sugar, provides active muscles with a quick source of fuel to maintain athletic performance. It also services the brain in that an athlete will notice a marked increase in mental focus on their sporting strategies.

Most importantly, it should not be carbonated as it can make you feel bloated, preventing you from ingesting further for complete hydration.

How do store bought varieties fare?

Here are the components of eight sports drinks Aerinlé found in NTUC FairPrice. While they largely met requirements, some do not contain recommended levels of potassium.

- Within recommended levels
- Out of recommended levels

Types of Sports Drinks



100 Plus

Carbs: 6.0g/100ml
Sugars: 15.0g/serving
Sodium: 123mg/serving
Potassium: 35mg/serving



100 Plus Edge

Carbs: 6.2g/100ml
Sugars: 18.6g/serving
Sodium: 135mg/serving
Potassium: **Unsubstantial**



H-TWO-O

Carbs: 7.0g/100ml
Sugars: 21.0g/serving
Sodium: 126mg/serving
Potassium: 48mg/serving



Monster Khaos

Carbs: 8.0g/100ml
Sugars: 19.0g/serving
Sodium: 122mg/serving
Potassium: **Unsubstantial**



Sports Water

Carbs: 5.2g/100ml
Sugars: 15.6g/serving
Sodium: 87mg/serving
Potassium: 51mg/serving



Aquarius

Carbs: 5.7g/100ml
Sugars: 13.7g/serving
Sodium: 98mg/serving
Potassium: 17mg/serving



Lucozade Sport

Carbs: 6.4g/100ml
Sugars: 17.5g/serving
Sodium: **240mg/serving**
Potassium: 30mg/serving



Pocari Sweat

Carbs: 6.1g/100ml
Sugars: 20.1g/serving
Sodium: 171mg/serving
Potassium: **Unsubstantial**

3) When should it be consumed?

Jaelyn: For sports lasting longer than 45 minutes, it should be consumed 15 to 30 minutes before exercise. Consuming 300 to 500ml is recommended. This is to top up glucose and electrolyte levels in your blood.

During your sport, if drinking is feasible, drink 150 to 250ml of sports drink every 15 minutes. That is about three to four mouthfuls. This will help to spare muscle glycogen stores so you have a constant supply of energy.

After your sport, consume at least 500ml of sports drink. The idea is to replenish all lost fluids especially after an intense workout.

Theodore: Drinking sports drinks in small amounts every 15 to 20 minutes during high intensity workouts can improve performance.

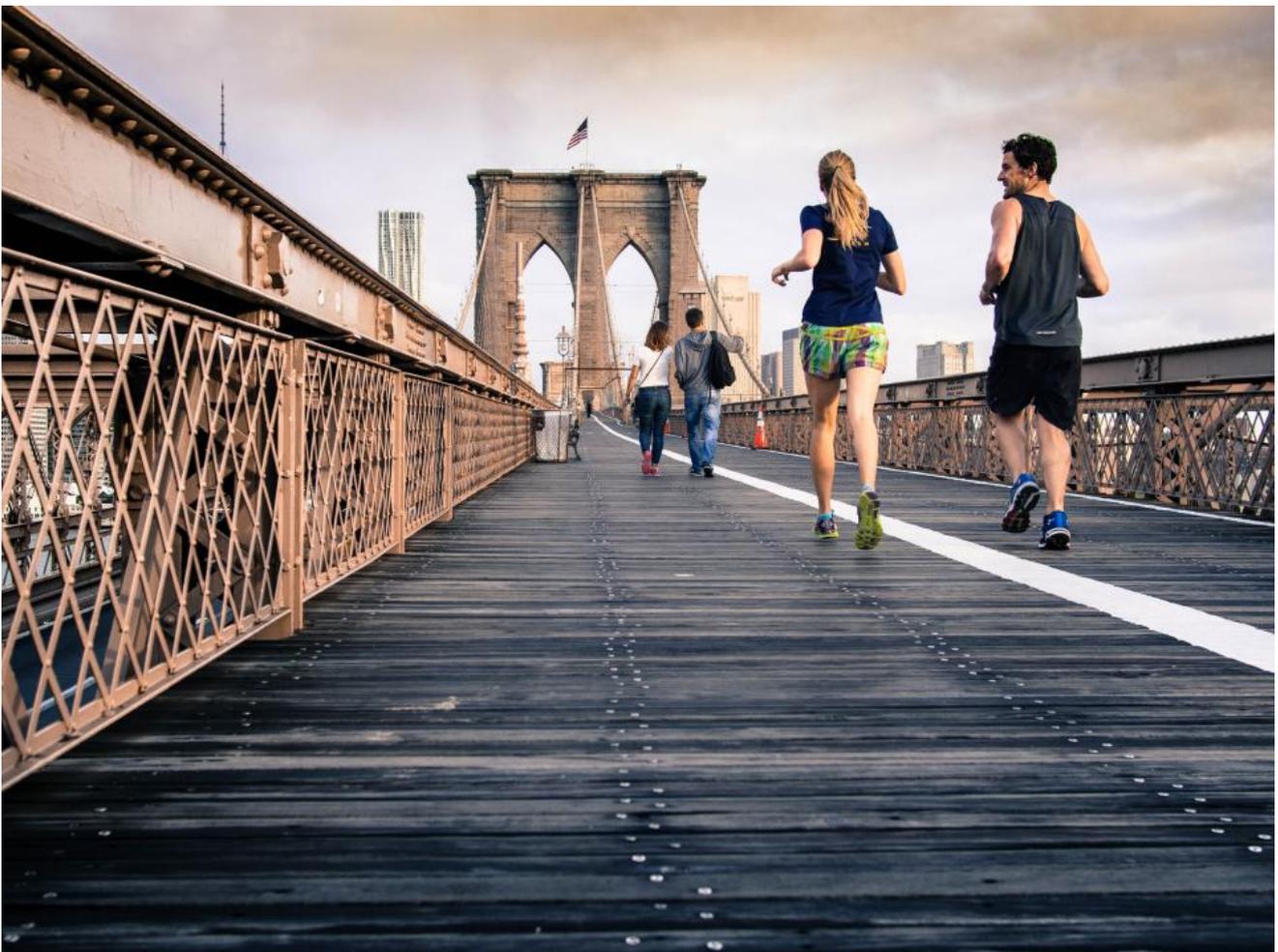
Due to obligatory losses from urine output and ongoing perspiration, adequate hydration (with the inclusion of sports drinks) may need to be consumed over the next two to four hours post recovery.

4) I haven't worked out at a high intensity. Will a sports drink do me harm?

Jaclyn: While a sports drink contains much needed nutrients such as carbohydrate and minerals for long exercise sessions, it also contain calories. This means if you are exercising for weight loss, you may be hampering your weight loss efforts. Therefore it is important to use sports drinks wisely.

Theodore: Essentially, it won't. If we think of our regular isotonic sports drink, drinking it without a workout of considerable length does no detriment. It merely conveys benefits for replenishing fluid and electrolytes.

For those who do not engage in moderate to high intensity exercises, prolonged drinking may lead to weight gain, due to the additional calories from glucose.



At the end of the day, there is no one size fits all guide to sports drink consumption.

“As with all nutrition plans, you need to experiment with it as every individual have different tolerance levels. Speak to a sports dietitian who can customise one for you,” Ms Reutens sums up.

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