

# Sports Drinks



These days, sports drinks are seen by many people as an indispensable part of playing sport and exercising. They're one of the first things they grab as they're rushing out the door to the gym or the sports field. The thinking is - if the big sports celebrities at the top of their game consume them, then they must be good for you, right?

That's not quite how it works.

Sports drinks have been designed to help professional athletes recover from the stresses their intense athletic activities put them under, and they're usually administered in carefully-controlled circumstances. If you're a "weekend warrior" however, these drinks don't really do that much to improve your performance, hydration or overall health, despite what sports drinks manufacturers might say.

And even worse for your teeth, they're full of sugars and acids that over time cause tooth erosion and decay. Like a good many things in life, they're best consumed in moderation, if you're going to consume them at all.

## A better way to stay hydrated

So what's a better option when you're sweating it out on the field or in the gym?

Water – yes, good old-fashioned, straight out of the tap water. It deals with the telltale signs of dehydration such as a dryness or acidic taste in the mouth and excessive sweating in no time flat, it's free, and comes packed with fluoride that's been proven to protect your teeth and reduce decay.

And it doesn't come with any hard-to-read labels full of unpronounceable ingredients.

## Reading the label

One quick way to work out whether what you're eating or drinking is beneficial to your dental and overall health is to get familiar with the way food and drink manufacturers word their labels. It's actually not as challenging as you might think.

For instance, you can quickly tell if the product you're consuming has sugar or acid by checking not just for the word "sugar" but for honey, rice syrup or even "organic dehydrated cane juice". Similarly to check for acidity, look for things like citric acid (a flavor enhancer) or "sodium benzoate" (a preserving agent); generally if the ingredient ends in an "ate", it's an acidic preservative of some kind.

Once you're familiar with the way these ingredients are described, you'll be much better equipped to know which foods and drinks are good for the health of your teeth and gums and will help you stay at the top of your sporting game



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