Fluids On Race Day

Water and sports drinks provide you with fluid. Follow these recommendations and you will remain healthy! BUT DON'T OVER-DRINK! Remember, too much is as bad as too little. Use your urine color as a guide (see below):

- Drink at least 16 ounces of fluid 1-2 hours before the race.
- Drink another 16 ounces of fluid in the hour before the race.
- Check your urine 1/2 hour before the race…if clear to dark yellow…you are well pre-hydrated…if dark and concentrated…drink more fluids!
- ***During the race drink no more than 1 cup (8-10 ounces)*** of fluid every 15-20 minutes along the way - that does not mean a cup at EVERY water station! Water/Sports Drink stations are usually located throughout the course much closer than the 15-20 minute rule..
- **DO NOT** take any product with ephedra in it. Ephedra increases your risk of "heat illness." It should not be used while training or on race day!

Too Much Fluid Can Be Harmful

Most athletes understand the importance of drinking fluids, but some don't understand that drinking too much can be harmful as well. Over-hydrating can lead to a dangerous condition known as hyponatremia (low blood sodium). Runners or walkers out on the course for long periods, losing lots of sodium in sweat, are at risk. Overzealous drinkers who drink lots of water in the days prior to the race and then stop at every fluid station along the course, and /or drink quarts after finishing also may risk hyponatremia. This condition can lead to nausea, fatigue, vomiting, weakness, sleepiness, changes in sensorium and in the most severe instances, seizures, coma and death.

To avoid hyponatremia follow these easy guidelines:

- Follow the fluid recommendations.
- Try not to drink more than you sweat.
- Include pretzels or a salted bagel in your pre-race meal.
- Favor a sports drink that has some sodium in it over water, which has none.
- In the days before the race, add salt to your foods (provided that you don't have high blood pressure or your doctor has restricted your salt intake).
- Eat salted pretzels during the last half of the race.
- Carry a small salt packet with you, and during the last half of the race, if you feel that you have been sweating a lot or that it's a warm/hot day, consume that single packet.

- After the race, drink a sports drink that has sodium in it and eat some pretzels or a salted bagel.
- Stop taking non-steroidal anti-inflammatories 24 hours before your race and do not start again until a minimum of 6 hours after finishing the race.

Weigh In Daily during the hot months of summer

Step out of bed every morning and onto the scale.

- If you're anywhere from 1% to 3% lighter than yesterday, re-hydrate by drinking 8 ounces of fluid for each pound lost before training again.
- Between 3% and 6% lighter, re-hydrate and back off that day's training intensity.
- Over 7%, get to the doctor.

Drink During Workouts

Two hours before your workout, drink about half a quart. Drink again as early as 15 minutes into the session, but keep the doses small - 4 to 7 ounces.

And After Workouts?
Weigh yourself right before and after workouts. For every pound you lost, drink a pint of electrolyte replacement fluid watered down to whatever strength you like.

Pain Relievers

Recent medical research has shown that non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs) like Advil, Motrin, Aleve, ibuprofen, naproxen, etc. may be harmful to runners' kidney function if taken within 24 hours of running; acetaminophen (Tylenol®) has been shown to be safe. These NSAIDs are thought to increase the possibility of hyponatremia while running long distances due to their decreasing blood flow to the kidneys and interfering with a hormone that helps the body retain salt. Therefore it is recommended that on race day (specifically beginning midnight before you run) you do not use anything but acetaminophen (Tylenol®) if needed until 6 hours after you have finished the race, are able to drink without any nausea or vomiting, have urinated once, and feel physically and mentally back to normal. Then, an NSAID would be of benefit in preventing post-event muscle soreness.