

# Taft Union High School Athletics Department

## Hydration Guidelines

It is vital for every athlete (recreational or professional) to consume cool fluids at regular interval during their exercise session. This will help to prevent dehydration, regulate temperature, optimize athletic performance, and safeguard against heat illness & muscle cramps. An adequate supply of water is needed for energy production, temperature regulation, and elimination of waste products produced during exercise. When an athlete becomes dehydrated, he or she cannot cool-down properly (via sweating) and perform at their maximum potential. Maintaining hydration is accomplished by drinking fluids according to a schedule, as thirst is an **inadequate** guide to hydration status. Dehydration occurs prior to the thirst sensation

**MYTH** – *Never drink before exercise to prevent up-set stomach.*

**FACT** – *Athletes need to drink as much water as comfortable before (16oz – 30mins prior), during (6 – 8oz every 15 – 20mins), and after (recover original weight).*

### Guidelines for proper Hydration

- ❑ Drink 16 to 20 oz 15 – 30 mins. before exercise.
- ❑ Drink cool fluids to increase gastric emptying.
- ❑ Drink 6 to 8 oz every 15 to 20 mins. of exercise.
- ❑ Drink on a schedule rather than relying on thirst.
- ❑ Drink during training as well as competition.
- ❑ Drink 2 cups (16 oz) for every pound lost after exercising.
- ❑ To be safe, drink enough to quench your thirst and then some more. It is hard to replenish the body with fluids when you have fallen behind.
- ❑ Athletes need to drink more than 64 oz (8 cups) per day.

### Are you drinking enough?

- ❑ Check color of urine. Athletes who are well hydrated will have clear urine.
- ❑ Dark or scanty color = high concentration of waste product and you need to drink more.
- ❑ Check quantity of urine.
- ❑ Small quantity means lack of fluid consumption.
- ❑ Pale yellow means that hydration has returned to normal levels.
- ❑ Weighing before and after practice is a good indicator of how much fluid you need to replace.
- ❑ **Note** – thirst sensation indicates you have lost @ 1% of body weight.

### Fluid Choices

- ❑ The most effective fluids for hydration are water and fluid replacement drinks such as Gatorade.
- ❑ Avoid caffeine like soft drinks and coffee because they are diuretics-which will increase fluid loss.
- ❑ Drinks that are cold help to regulate temperature faster.
- ❑ Sports drinks with 6 – 10% carbohydrates provide fuels at the optimum level for performance.
- ❑ Sports drinks also provide low levels of sodium, which help you to absorb the fluids faster and also keep you thirsty, so you drink more.
- ❑ Sports drinks should be used especially after exercise, to replenish lost carbohydrates faster.
- ❑ Hyponatremia occurs when blood sodium concentration falls to an abnormally low level, prompting a rapid and dangerous swelling of the brain that can result in seizures, coma, and death.
  - ❑ The risk of hyponatremia can be reduced by making certain that fluid intake does not exceed sweat loss and by ingesting sodium containing beverages, like Gatorade or Powerade, or foods to help replace the sodium lost in sweat.