

## **Water, Ades, Energy Drinks and Race Day Foods**

Hydration is quite possibly one of the most important factors that affect how an athlete is able to perform. Since the human body consists of ninety percent water it is hard to imagine how someone would be able to perform consistently at their maxim level without being properly hydrated. All of the major functions of the body are dictated by the amount of water present in your cells. Even movement or possibly life itself would be hard to imagine without the presence of water. This substance is one of the most important building blocks of life, and should be respected and guaranteed to all.

For all athletes water should be their drink of choice, this is because it gives you everything you need; providing you are a generally healthy person and you have been eating right. If for some reason you have not been able to eat much that day it might be a good idea to drink some Gatorade or PowerAde slowly throughout the day. Do not substitute the Gatorade/PowerAde for water because it contains high amount of sugars that will just end up making you edgy and then tire out faster. Energy drinks should not be consumed on a day of activity, because all of these drinks contain nothing that actually gives you long lasting usable energy. If you drink these during race day you will most defiantly feel a burst of energy followed by a hard “bonk” that leaves you unable to regain momentum throughout the day. If you want to perform your very best nothing will ever beat proper nutrition, proper rest and good hydration.

When you drink Gatorade or PowerAde as a water substitute you take in an enormous amount of carbohydrates that were derived from corn. (aka high fructose corn syrup) Carbohydrates derived from corn are long chain molecules which are harder for your body to break down. The reason you get an energy rush from these drinks is because your carbohydrate flooded body is attempting to rid it self of excess energy before refueling. That is also why you get the “bonk” or sudden loss of energy, because your body switches from expending it’s excess to breaking down the new carbs. In contrast to this phenomenon fruit derived carbohydrates share a special relationship with our bodies. The carbs contained in any fruit that is not a member of the grass family are almost instantly broken down when eaten by humans. This is most likely because humans evolved in the jungles of the world where fruit was plentiful, and as we evolved we became very affective at obtaining energy from the food we most often ate. The enzymes in your saliva and stomach have the unique ability to break down carbs and amino acids from fruit faster and with greater efficiency, than nutrients from other sources.

On race day there is an array of foods that are great to keep you going and will not bog you down. Most large quantities of meat are extremely detrimental to your energy level, because meat is the most complex food your body can break down. This means that every time you eat meat huge amounts of blood goes to your stomach in an attempt to break it all down. This causes other parts of your body like your brain and muscles to suffer from a decreased level of blood flow. If you want to be able to perform correctly on race day you need to adhere to a strict diet of fruits, vegetables and possibly small portions of fish or eggs in the morning. As far as what you should drink, water is all you need. Unless, you wish to mix up a celebration drink to enjoy after the race, leave the Red Bull at home, because it will only bring you down in the end.