

EXERCISING IN THE HEAT?

Lower your risk of heat illness!



Dehydration, muscle cramps, and/or heat exhaustion lead to a poorer exercise performance.

Physical activity, training, and/or competing on hot days increases your fluid loss from sweating, and your chance of dehydration.

A low salt (sodium) diet, plus loss of sodium through sweating, can potentially lead to muscle cramps and/or heat illness.

On hot, humid days, your body has difficulty getting rid of heat. When your body temperature increases due to exercise in hot, humid conditions, serious heat illness is more likely. Check out the nutrition tip sheets [Expected Temperature and Humidity Ranges for Major Summer Games](#) and [Heat Illness Prevention Tips](#) for more information.

To lower your risk of dehydration and heat illness:

- drink enough fluid (check out the nutrition tip sheet [Fluids for Athletes](#) for more information)
- add a little salt to your diet and
- acclimatize yourself to the hot and/or humid environment where you will be training and/or competing by exercising in similar hot, humid conditions.

You are more likely to drink enough fluid to replace your sweat losses if your drink:

- is a flavour you like
- is chilled and within easy reach
- has a little sodium (0.5-0.7 g/litre) (add 1.5 mL or ¼ tsp of salt/litre) and contains some carbohydrate (40-80 g/litre). (Check out the nutrition tip sheet [Sport Drinks: Myths and Facts](#) for more information).

While a low sodium diet is important for some people with high blood pressure, this diet is NOT appropriate for healthy athletes who are training or competing in the heat. Most of your dietary sodium comes from salt added to food:

- during food processing
- while cooking your food, or
- at the table.

A low sodium diet may be dangerous when exercising in adverse conditions such as hot weather or hot, humid weather. To ensure that you are eating some salt, you can:

- add a little salt to your pre-exercise meal
- eat some salty foods like soup or pickles
- consume a drink that contains sodium (salt) before, during, and/or after exercise
- select foods that contain salt for your after exercise snack such as tomato juice, vegetable juice, pretzels, crackers, or low fat cheese
- add salt or soy sauce to your post-exercise meal.

For meal and snack ideas for your athletes, check [Foods and Fluids for Team Sports](#).

By training in weather conditions similar to the venue where you will compete (acclimatizing), your body conserves sodium and dissipates heat more effectively. These training effects lower your risk of heat illness.

SNAC Sport Nutrition Advisory Committee
Comité consultatif sur la nutrition sportive

