

Consuming Thoughts
by

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Water is critical for athletic performance. As a nutrient often overlooked, water is essential for all body functions and is of special concern to all athletes during periods of strenuous exercise, especially in hot surroundings. Just as an engine needs coolant to keep it running well, so does your exercising body. Without enough water you become weak and your body can overheat.

Your most important nutritional goal should be to prevent dehydration. Dehydration increases the risk of heat injuries such as heat cramps, heat exhaustion and potentially fatal heat stroke. Drinking water before, during and after practices and events is essential to prevent dehydration even though you may not be thirsty.

Students often ask what and how much should I drink on the day of an event or practice? You need to experiment during practice to find out what works best. Start with these recommendations: Before activity: (2 hours before) drink 1-2 cups of water, then 5-15 minutes before the event drink 1 cup cool water. (Cool drinks empty from the stomach more readily than warm drinks and help performance).

During activity (every 10-15 minutes) drink 1/2 cup to 1 cup cool water or as often as possible.

After activity: (After cooling down) drink any of the following: water, fruit juice or drinks, sports drinks, carbonated soft drinks, and eat foods high in water content such as grapes, watermelon, and citrus fruits.

Water bottles are provided for most athletic events. You should have your own container and not share bottles to avoid spreading infectious diseases. This is especially important at indoor events in the winter such as basketball and volleyball when flu and cold viruses are prevalent.

If water is not provided, place a filled water bottle in the refrigerator the night before a game or practice and take it with you in a small cooler.

Should I use water, sports drinks, fruit juice or soft drinks?

Drinks containing 10 percent or greater sugar concentration such as carbonated soft drinks; fruit juices such as orange and apple; and juice drinks can cause cramps, nausea, bloating or diarrhea if used right before an event. These drinks, especially fruit juice, are fine to use as a fluid replacer after an athletic event.

Sports drinks such as Gateraid that contain 6-8 percent glucose (a compound that makes up sugar) and electrolytes (sodium, chloride and potassium) are used by the body as quickly as water. They do not cause intestinal problems. For endurance events (activities lasting 90 minutes or more such as bicycling), sports drinks can provide energy to working muscles and help keep body fluids in balance during long-lasting exercise.

Most teens athletes are not endurance athletes. Plain water will sufficiently meet the fluid replacement needs for most.

If you feel it's important to use sports drinks, there is no harm in doing so. Sports drinks are often the "in thing." The important issue is that you drink.

How do I know if I am getting enough to drink? The best and most practical indicators are the color and amount of urine produced. Look for clear, light-colored urine, and frequent urination. Those are signs that your body is getting enough fluid. Dark colored urine and infrequent urination are clues that indicate more fluids are needed. These signs are not always reliable if you are on medication or taking vitamin supplements that can cause the urine to be more concentrated or discolored.

Some sports require weigh-ins before and after activity which gives you the coaching staff a way to measure water loss during an activity.

What should I drink at times other than practice and game days? Water! It's the smart choice.

Resource: A Sports Nutrition Guide for Teens by Sue Travis and Len Marquart.

Sheepberry Farms Wins Champion Fleece

HALIFAX (Dauphin Co.) — Sheepberry Farms, Halifax, was awarded the Grand Champion fleece at York Interstate Fair, which was conducted in mid-September.

Exhibitors from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and several other states entered wool representing the many variety of sheep produced in the east.

Sheepberry Farms is owned and operated by Terry and Christine Flanagan. The Flanagan's raise several different breeds of sheep: Border Leicester, Rambouillet, Suffolk, Targhee, and commercial crossbreed. The fleeces shown at the York Interstate Fair represented one year's growth, which started after shearing in 2002.

The grand champion fleece was produced by a natural color Border Leicester ram. Border Leicester wool is a coarse wool, but soft to touch, with high lustrous curly locks. The Flanagan's entered a total of 13 fleeces and took seven first place ribbons, two second place, three third place, and one fourth place award. Two of the first place fleeces were also awarded a reserve champion ribbon for individual wool classifications.

The Flanagan's take great pride in the quality of the wool produced at Sheepberry Farms. Prize-winning fleeces start with a



Terry and Christine Flanagan with their grand champion fleeces at the York Interstate Fair.

healthy well maintained sheep flock, careful shearing, and proper storage. Wool is mostly protein and can be damaged by illness to the sheep, improper or poor nutrition, extreme weather conditions, and stress.

Approximately 300 sheep and lambs reside on the 80 acres of Sheepberry Farms, along with seven llamas, a few chickens, some cats, and one Border collie dog. In addition to the livestock, the Sheepberry Farms has produced prize-winning flowers, such as dahlias and iris. The

Flanagan's raise about 15 varieties of dahlias and 12 varieties of iris.

"Farming is a real adventure," comments Christine Flanagan, "most people can not appreciate the intense labor needed to produce the many items so plentiful that we use every day besides food and clothing."

To help educate the non-farming public the Flanagan's perform wool spinning and weaving demonstrations, teach workshops for schools and tourist centers, and open their farm to school and church field trips.

Strengthening Families Workshop

ALLENTOWN (Lehigh Co.) — The fall conference on Strengthening Families First is scheduled at the Days Inn and Conference Center, Allentown, Thursday, October 23.

The conference will focus on the state of marriage and family today and examine local community and government initiatives responding to the President's Initiative to promote healthy marriages, strengthening families, and building positive relationships.

The conference will include speakers Scott Stanley, Ph.D., co-founder of PREP, Inc., featured on Oprah, 20/20, Good Morning America, etc.; Chris Gersten, principal deputy assistant Secretary for the administration for Children & Families (ACF) in the U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services; Julie Baumgardner, executive director of First Things First, a one of a kind grassroots organization dedicated to strengthening families in Chattanooga,

Tenn. In addition break-out sessions will feature other regional and local speakers. Closing the conference will be a panel discussion allowing for questions and answers.

Strengthening Families First is the vision of the Berks County Healthy Marriage and Family Coalition. The Strengthening Families First Conference is geared to people and agencies inter-

ested in promoting and strengthening healthy marriages and families.

Cost of the conference is \$75 and includes breakfast and lunch.

For more information or to make reservations, call Nan Bucci (610) 289-8900, extension 238 or Cheryl Guthier (610) 376-6988.

Compare Prepaid Phone Cards Carefully

LEESPORT (Berks Co.) — Price per minute doesn't tell the whole story — 1021 minutes for \$20. There may be other charges, taxes, and fees in the fine print at the bottom or on the back of the card. Some are connection fees, monthly maintenance fees, and extra fees for using pay phones or calling cell phones.

A connection fee of 59 cents per call on a card of 2 cents per minute costs you 30 minutes if anyone or an answering machine answers your call. If your card has a three-minute minimum, you will be charged for three minutes even if you only talk for 30 seconds. This call would cost you 33 minutes (66 cents) and you talked for 30 seconds.

The minutes disappear quickly when these charges are on your card. Look for the cards that don't have these extra charges.

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