



## **Fluid Replacement and Athletic Participation**

Fluid intake plays a vital role in athletic performance. Fluid loss as little as 3% of body weight has been shown to reduce athletic performance significantly. A fluid loss of greater than 3% can lead to heat illness and even death. Here are some tips to avoid problems related to fluid loss.

- Get in shape and acclimate prior to the start of the practice season  
*“Get in shape to play the sport, don’t use the sport to get into shape”*
- Know the warning signs of dehydration and heat illness, respect that early warning signs do not always appear prior to significant problems
- Don’t rely on thirst to drink
- Drink throughout the day
- Avoid rapid weight loss, monitor weight and be certain to regain water weight loss prior to resuming athletic activity
- Drink at least 17 to 20 oz of fluid 2 to 3 hours before a practice or game
- Drink an additional 7 to 10 oz of fluid 10 to 20 minutes before competition
- Drink 28 to 40 oz of fluid per hour of play (at least 7 to 10 oz every 10 to 15 minutes) to replace sweat loss during exercise
- Drink 20 – 24 oz per pound of weight loss within two hours of finishing practice or competition
- Avoid drinks with greater than 8% carbohydrates during exercise
- Strive to achieve fluid intake to match sweat rate and urine loss

### **Signs of Dehydration and Heat Illness**

- Thirst
- Irritability
- Headache
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Cramps
- Nausea
- Decreased performance

Consult with the certified athletic trainers (ATCs) at your school for more information regarding fluid replacement and heat illness.