

# SAFETY TALK



NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY • UPPER GREAT PLAINS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE • NORTH DAKOTA LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

## HYDRATION

### ***Why drinking water alone does not “hydrate” the body.***

You’ve heard it many times before, *“drink lots and lots of water! You should be drinking a minimum of half your body weight in ounces of water each and every day.”*

Sounds great...but are you hydrating or just flushing your system?

Hydration is NOT simply drinking water. It involves far more than that. You need to drink so that you allow your body to actually absorb water (hydrating). You may not be absorbing much of that water you’re drinking because you don’t have the essential minerals, electrolytes and salts to keep it in your system.



Staying hydrated is even more critical now that it is hot...you’re sweating more. Every pound of weight lost while sweating can equal up to 16-20 ounces of fluid lost. That’s fluid that needs to be replenished as soon as possible. Sweating and weight loss during a work day or a workout is a natural process, but you must replenish both the fluid and the nutrients lost for your body to adapt and recover.

The solution? Electrolytes! Electro-what? What the heck are Electrolytes? Electrolytes are chemicals (primarily sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, and vitamin c) that form ions in body fluids. They help make sure specific bodily functions run at optimal levels. When your body lacks electrolytes, it cannot become truly hydrated. Electrolytes help reduce muscle cramps, fatigue, promote ligament and tendon durability, provide mental clarity, help regulate blood flow, and many other unseen benefits.



*July 2017 by Chris Padilla, Training Manager, NDSU Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, ND LTAP*

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Try to avoid sugar-laden electrolyte drinks, such as Gatorade®, Powerade®, soda, and energy drinks. In most cases, these products dehydrate the body and spike insulin response in the body, which in turn promotes fat and dangerous elevations in heart rate. If you're looking for a simple way to get the most out of your water, taking a pinch of salt will always work.



However, for more flavor and benefit, try to find an electrolyte supplement, such as Nuun – Active Hydration, Camelback Elixir, Hydralyte, etc. They come in many flavors and there is no excess sugar and flavoring in their products. These products have the essential electrolytes, minerals, and salts to help you absorb the water you're drinking. Some of them even come in a caffeinated version for a slow release caffeine fix.

Stay safe and hydrated everyone!

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