

# Health Awareness

## When Water Isn't Enough

(NAPSA)—The next time you're thirsty, it could be smart to think before you drink. While people say "you are what you eat," the phrase is more accurately "you are what you drink." Human bodies are about 60 percent water, and while watery foods can help meet your needs, most of your daily water needs are met from the fluids you drink.

Aside from plain water, consumers are faced with a dizzying array of juices, juice drinks, vitamin-fortified waters, sports drinks, energy drinks and teas—making it difficult to choose the best beverage to help meet fluid needs.

Even though plain water might suffice for the average exerciser, many people prefer drinks with a little flavor, and tastier fluids may encourage consumption. As exercise duration and intensity increase, it's important to not only replace fluid losses, but to replace body salts, such as sodium and potassium, that are lost with sweating.

### Look Before You Drink

When evaluating beverages, a good place to start is by reading the nutrition facts label. For instance, sodas or fruit drinks are often high in calories and sugar and low on nutrients. Not only can these empty calories pile on the pounds, the high sugar concentration in sodas and fruit drinks can actually slow down the rate at which the body absorbs fluid. If you see high-fructose corn syrup at the top of the ingredient list, you may want to pass. Sugars other



**It's a good idea to hydrate with a low-calorie beverage that's high in electrolytes.**

than fructose, in lower concentrations, are much better absorbed.

Some energy drinks have a combination of caffeine and sugar, designed to give you a quick spike in energy. But if you aren't used to consuming caffeinated drinks, these could make you jittery or upset your stomach.

So what should you look for? It's a good idea to check labels for electrolytes, such as sodium and potassium, which are salts that your body loses when you perspire. In addition to replacing what's lost, electrolytes can add some flavor, which will encourage you to drink more. Also, look for drinks with less than 100 calories per 8-ounce serving. Higher calories means a higher sugar concentration; you don't want to drink back the calories you just burned on the treadmill.

While too much sugar can be a problem, a little bit of carbohydrate in beverages can help to

maintain blood sugar while you're exercising. A mixture of several forms of carbohydrate in the drink helps get carbohydrates into working muscle better than just one carbohydrate source.

A drink such as Herbalife's new H3O™ could be a good choice because it contains the right amount of readily absorbed carbohydrates, no caffeine and the essential electrolytes people lose when they perspire. It comes in a powder that mixes easily with water and is available either in a canister or in convenient single-serving "stick packs" that can be thrown in a bag or pocket and mixed into any water bottle.

### Staying Hydrated

You may become dehydrated before you are actually thirsty. This is one reason athletes learn to drink on a schedule. Two cups of fluid a couple of hours before you start exercising should be followed with another cup or so 10 to 20 minutes before you start. A few ounces every 15 minutes or so when you are working out can help prevent excessive fluid losses. Watch for other signs and symptoms of dehydration during exercise, such as muscle cramping or feeling light-headed or faint.

Even if you're only a weekend warrior, adequate fluids are important for a healthy, well-functioning body. If you think you drink less than you should, a flavorful beverage, designed to help you hydrate, might be just the thing to help meet your fluid needs.