



Covenant Health Knoxville Marathon

TIPS FOR PROPER FLUID REPLACEMENT



Too much fluid CAN be harmful!

Most runners understand the importance of drinking fluids. However, some may not understand drinking too much can be harmful as well. Overhydration can lead to a dangerous condition known as hyponatremia (low blood sodium). Endurance athletes, such as long distance runners, lose a large amount of sodium in sweat and are at increased risk for developing hyponatremia. Overzealous drinkers who drink large amounts of water in the days prior to a race, and then stop at every fluid station along the race course are also at risk. Hyponatremia can lead to nausea, fatigue, vomiting, weakness, sleepiness, and changes in sensorium. In the most severe instances, hyponatremia can cause seizures, coma, and even death.

Fluid replacement guidelines on race day

- Drink 16 oz. of fluid 1-2 hours before race start
- Drink another 16 oz. in the hour before the start
- Check your urine 1/2 hour before the race. If it is clear to dark yellow, you are well prehydrated. If it is dark and concentrated, drink more fluids
- During the race, drink no more than 8-10 oz. of fluid every 15-20 minutes along the course – that does NOT mean a cup at EVERY water station. (Water/sports drink stations are located throughout the Covenant Health Knoxville Marathon course.)
- DO NOT take any product with

ephedra in it. Ephedra increases your risk of “heat illnesses.” It should not be used while training or on race day!

Follow these easy guidelines to avoid hyponatremia

- Follow the fluid recommendations.
- Try not to drink more than you sweat.
- Include pretzels or a salted bagel in your pre-race meal.
- Choose a sports drink that has some sodium in it.
- Add salt to your foods (provided you do not have high blood pressure or dietary restrictions) in the days before a race.
- Eat salted pretzels during the last half of the race, OR
- Carry a small salt packet with you. During the last half of the race, consume that single packet if you feel you have been sweating a lot or if it is hot.
- Drink a sports drink containing sodium and eat some pretzels or a salted bagel after the race.

Additional tips for race day

Pain relievers and runners

Stop taking non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAIDs) like Advil, Motrin, Aleve, ibuprofen and naproxen 24 hours prior to the race and do not resume until a minimum of 6 hours post race. Recent medical research has shown that NSAID use may be harmful to runners' kidney function if taken within 24 hours of running. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) has been shown to be safe. NSAIDS may also contribute to hyponatremia by

decreasing the blood flow to the kidneys and interfering with a hormone that helps the body retain sodium. It is recommended that on race day you do not use anything but acetaminophen until 6 hours after you have finished, are able to drink without any nausea or vomiting, have urinated once, and feel physically and mentally back to normal. Then, an NSAID would be of benefit in preventing post-event muscle soreness.

Finish well!

During the race, blood has been re-directed to your legs, away from your internal organs. This is normal physiology you should know about. **YOU MUST CONTINUE TO WALK AFTER YOUR RACE - MOVE FOR AT LEAST 20 MINUTES!** If you stop walking and/or sit down, the blood flow to your internal organs will not rapidly be redirected to the pre-race state. You would then feel nauseated (not enough blood flow to your stomach) and vomit. You would also feel dizzy and weak. Walking after the race helps redirect your blood and return your body to its everyday physiology. Drink fluids slowly at the finish, and remember to adequately “walk it off!”

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