

## **RUNNING SHORTS**

### **Hydration is serious business for runners**

By Ken Johnson

The human body needs a certain amount of water to operate properly. Exactly how much depends on several factors, such as age, weight and physical activity. In any case, it is important for all of us to stay hydrated. Dehydration can cause serious medical problems.

Hydration is particularly important for runners. The physical exertion of running results in heavy sweating. If you lose more water than you consume, you become dehydrated. Symptoms include dizziness, confusion, lethargy, nausea, vomiting and dryness of the mouth and lips and dark yellow urine. And, dehydration affects running performance.

Runners should get an idea of how much water they lose during running by weighing themselves before and after a run (subtract the weight of the water consumed during the run). The general rule is to drink one pint of water for every pound lost during running. Drink before, during and after you run. Keep drinking until your urine is a light lemonade color. Keep in mind that alcoholic drinks contribute to dehydration.

When you sweat, you not only lose water, you lose sodium (salt) and other electrolytes, such as potassium and chloride. These need to be replaced too. So, you should not only drink water, drink sport drinks, such as Gatorade or Powerade, which contain electrolytes. These drinks also include carbohydrates, which will provide fuel for your run. As an alternative, you can take electrolyte capsules with water. The recommended dose is 2 capsules per hour of running. These can be purchased at running stores or health food stores.

There is also such a thing as over-hydration. If you consume only water during a long run and do not replace the electrolytes, you may develop hyponatremia, which can also cause serious medical problems. This is where the normal balance of electrolytes in the body is pushed outside safe limits by too much water. In other words, the excess of water in your body dilutes the required electrolytes.

Running is a great sport to achieve and maintain physical fitness. However, always be aware of the dangers of dehydration, especially during the hot summer months. During long training runs, carry fluids with you or have places on your route where you can get fluids. During races, do not skip the aid stations. Run safe.

#### **Recent race results:**

##### **Greyhound 5K, Kosse, June 14**

Steve Allen, 42	22:01
Ken Johnson, 73	36:08

##### **Run the Woodlands 5K, The Woodlands, June 14**

Taylor McDonald, 16	18:26
Emily Villines, 17	22:27
Steve Bickford, 53	22:39
Mandie Villines, 16	24:56
Darren Grant, 49	24:56

**XTERRA 25K (15.5 miles) Trail Run, Flower Mound, June 8**

Steve Allen, 42      2:46:16

**Boswell's Beer Run 5K, Willis, June 7**

Kelly Bielamowicz, 39    30:27

Jill Blake, 35            31:18

**Heights 5K, Houston, June 7**

Ken Johnson, 73      35:41

**Upcoming races in Huntsville:**

June 21 – June Bug 5K and 1-Mile, Spring Lake Sub-division

June 22 – Gater Bait Trail Run, 15K, 5K, Huntsville State Park

July 26 – Dog Days 5K and 1-Mile, Forest Hills Sub-division

For more information about these races and others in the area, visit the Seven Hills Running Club web site at <http://www.7hills.us> and click on Race Schedule.