



What is a sports drink?

Sports drinks are functional beverages used by active Australians for rehydration, refuelling and to support athletic performance.

Generally, reference to sports drinks relates to beverages containing carbohydrates and electrolytes. Many people consume drinks with electrolytes for rehydration due to sweat loss.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand prescribes the composition of electrolyte drinks (the main type of sports drink) and electrolyte drink bases as:



CARBOHYDRATE
(specified sugars)
50-100 g/L



SODIUM
≥10 MMOL/L
(230 mg/L)



OSMOLALITY
(isotonic only)
250-340 mOsmol/L



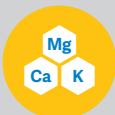
What is in a sports drink?



Carbohydrates are the body's fuel. They are macronutrients which provide energy to cells, particularly brain and muscle cells during exercise¹.



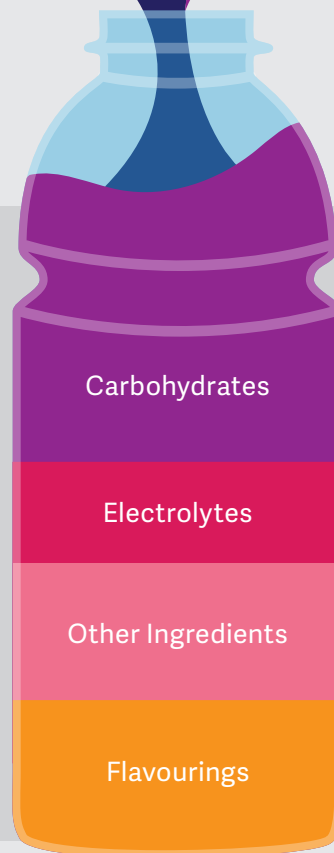
The most common electrolytes (also called salts) found in sports drinks include sodium and potassium.



As manufacturers of sports drinks innovate, further beneficial ingredients can be found in beverages within this category. These may include additional vitamins, minerals, and protein.



Flavourings are added to sports drinks to improve the taste of the product so consumers enjoy the beverage and benefit from consuming it².



¹American College of Sports Medicine, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, and Dietitians of Canada, Nutrition and Athletic Performance, Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise, 2016; 48(3): 543-68.

²American College of Sports Medicine, Exercise and fluid replacement: position stand, Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise, 2007;39(2):377-90.

When to use a sports drink



Who should drink sports drinks?

Many Australians consume electrolyte drinks to help them reach their maximum potential, while others consume them after exercise as a recovery aid.

Active adults

The best beverage for active adults depends on a variety of factors including the amount and intensity of exercise and the environment in which the physical activity takes place.

Active adolescents

For adolescents participating in prolonged and vigorous physical activity, such as competitive sports tournaments, they may benefit from consuming sports drinks during these periods.

The totality of the diet should be considered with a sports dietitian prior to the consumption of sports drinks.



Further information

For further information about sports drinks and other non-alcoholic beverages, please visit australianbeverages.org

Additional resources

Australian Sports Commission
sportaus.gov.au

Sports Dietitians Australia
sportsdietitians.com.au