



### **Sport drinks, yea or nay?**

Although they're not necessary for everyone all of the time, there is definitely a time and a place for their use.

Let's start by looking at what's in sport drinks. These drinks typically contain carbohydrates, electrolytes (primarily sodium and potassium), flavour, and may also include other ingredients, such as vitamins, minerals and/or protein. The carbohydrates can be utilised to fuel the working muscles before and during activity, and replenish fuel stores after activity; sodium encourages fluid intake and assists with fluid absorption/retention to optimise hydration, while potassium assists with muscle contraction during activity. And the flavour improves palatability to increase consumption and optimise hydration.

For anyone taking part in moderate exercise of a short duration (< 60minutes) or lower intensity sports, sport drinks have not been shown to improve performance. However, the intake of carbohydrate and fluid has been shown to be beneficial for high intensity activity of at least 60 minutes, meaning sports drinks are a good option for many types of sporting activity.

So, if you're heading out to play a game of social basketball later this week, you may not need a sports drink. If you're increasing the distance you're running as you train for that marathon you've registered for, have a think about where sport drinks may fit into your fuelling/hydration plan.

***VIS Sports Dietitian, Kylie Andrew***