NUTRI-FACTS

WHAT IS AN ELECTROLYTE, ANYWAY?

May, Issue 1

ELECTROLYTES

We've all heard of 'em. Most of us know that we can get them from Gatorade or Smart Water. We know that we're supposed to replace them after a tough workout, but what the heck are they? An electrolyte is a substance that ionizes (develops +/- charge) when dissolved in solvents such as water. In your body, Electrolytes affect and regulate hydration of the body along with blood pH levels, and are critical for nerve and muscle function. Simple things like the contraction and release of muscles when you exercise (or even walk) would be impossible without the right Electrolyte balance. That balance is what helps each and every one of your 75 trillion cells communicate with each other.

Sodium, Potassium, and Chloride are three of the main Electrolytes in your body. Without them, all life would come to a screeching halt. We'll talk a little more about these three later in the series.

SWEAT

Sweat is just one of the signs of a great workout that can let you know that you've had a great workout. It pours out of us when all of our body's mechanisms are working properly. It's our body's way of cooling itself down and it's also our body's means of removing waste from many metabolic processes. One of those processes is balancing your electrolytes. If you exercise, you sweat and if you sweat, some Electrolytes leave your body. The good news is that if your diet is rich in fresh fruits and veggies, chances are you are getting an ample supply of Electrolytes for basic health. Performance Athletes and people who workout vigorously and frequently do require extra Potassium, due to a substantial increase of usage during exercise.

If you're experiencing fatigue, cramping, or your performance is hampered, you may want to try a sports drink during your workout. Read the label and make sure that Potassium is on the label. Be sure to sip your sports drink throughout the workout, then immediately following your workout, down a Recovery Shake with a banana in it. Post-workout is the best time to deliver the nutrients and necessary sugars back into your muscle cells so that your body can keep your Electrolyte balance intact and rebuild a better you.

EAT WELL!

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Eat Well. Live Well (and Long).

NUTRI-FACTS

WHAT IS AN ELECTROLYTE, ANYWAY?

May, Issue 2

ELECTROLYTES - SODIUM

Sodium is the main Electrolyte found in extracellular (outside) fluid, and is a positively charged Electrolyte (cation). It is involved in fluid balance and blood pressure control. Sodium is extremely important and your body needs it, but (just like with everything else) not too much. The FDA recommends a daily intake of 1500 - 2300 mg, but the average American takes in 3400+ mgs a day! Sodium is everywhere in processed food, and even in places where you would least expect it. If we're not careful, our diets can throw us into Sodium overload!

I KNOW THAT SWEAT TASTES SALTY BUT...

There is a much lower percentage of Sodium in our sweat than there is throughout our bodies. It is more likely that your delicate balance of Potassium, not Sodium, is altered when you sweat. We do lose some Sodium when we sweat, but unless you are someone who is training for an iron man competition, you don't need to replace much Sodium after sweating. The first thing you should replace is water, next carbs and then you can worry about your Electrolytes. Sodium usually takes care of itself.

The human body evolved over thousands of years on a diet that was very low in Sodium. Most fresh food is naturally low in Sodium. Stone-ground wheat is 120 parts Potassium to 1 part Sodium. Even seafood, which lives in an environment where there is 24x more Sodium than there is Potassium, is a high-Potassium, low-Sodium food. (e.g. - fresh Tuna is 100 parts Potassium to 20 parts Sodium). Processing these fresh foods reverses the ratios dramatically. Canned Tuna is 100 parts Potassium to 300 parts Sodium, and whole Wheat bread is 100 parts Potassium to 570 parts Sodium! It's easy to get into Sodium overload with numbers like this.

THE RAMIFICATIONS OF SODIUM OVERLOAD

The evidence that links Salt intake to blood pressure is now overwhelming. Hypertension (high blood pressure) has become an epidemic and leads to many other health complications. We know that high blood pressure is largely due to excess Salt & weight, insufficient exercise and lack of sufficient fruits and vegetables in our diet. Over time, if gone unchecked, hypertension can lead to heart disease and stroke. So, eat your fruits & veggies and ditch the salt...even after exercise!

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WHAT IS AN ELECTROLYTE, ANYWAY?

May, Issue 3

ELECTROLYTES - POTASSIUM

Potassium is the main Electrolyte found in intracellular (inside) fluid, and is a positively charged Electrolyte (cation). It is perhaps the most important electrolyte. Potassium cations are important in neuron (brain & nerve) function and in influencing osmotic balance within the cellular environment. It interacts with Sodium and Chloride to enable nerves to conduct the electrochemical communication that allows your body to function.

REQUIREMENTS

All creatures evolved on a high-Potassium, low-Sodium diet. The current recommended daily intake for Potassium for adults is 4700 mg, however the average American only consumes about 2,500 mg a day (that's barely enough for a couch potato, let alone an active person). Speaking of potatoes...

WHERE TO GET IT?

Post World War II, food processors completely reversed the content levels of Potassium and Sodium in the foods that we eat to by adding salt to everything. The average American diet now contains twice the amount of Sodium as Potassium, whereas most experts say that our bodies have evolved to perform best with 7x more Potassium than Sodium. All hope is not lost though, because if you are consuming a varied diet of fresh foods, specifically fruits and veggies, then chances are you are getting enough Potassium to maintain the optimal balance. For those of you that push your body to extremes, supplementation of between 100-500 mg Potassium a day may be necessary. One easy fix is to always include a banana in your post-workout Recovery Shake. At least then you know that you are getting Potassium when you most need it.

For the rest of your diet, here are some foods that are high in Potassium are: (based on 1 serving):

POTATO 940 MG
SWEET POTATO 540 MG
BANANA 490 MG
HALIBUT 490 MG
LIMA BEANS 490 MG
FRESH TUNA 480 MG
SPINACH 420 MG
SALMON 390 MG
CANTALOUPE 370 MG
LENTILS 370 MG
GRAPES 310 MG
FLOUNDER 290 MG
PINTO BEANS 290 MG
BEEF 270 MG
WHEAT GERM 270 MG
ORANGE 230 MG
ALMONDS 210 MG
PEANUTS 130 MG

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WHAT IS AN ELECTROLYTE, ANYWAY?

May, Issue 4

ELECTROLYTES - CHLORIDE

Chloride is the main Electrolyte found in extracellular (outside) fluid, and is a negatively charged Electrolyte (anion). It is responsible for maintaining acid/base balance, transmitting nerve impulses and regulating fluid in and out of cells. Chloride is also an essential component in digestive juices. Because most Americans consume too much salt, we are getting too much Chloride. (Table salt's proper name is Sodium Chloride.)

REQUIREMENTS

The RDA of Chloride for adults is between 1800-2300 mg daily. Since Chloride is a component of table salt, most Americans get too much. Some get as much as 7000 mg a day. If you follow a low-Sodium diet, most likely your Chloride intake will take care of itself.

REDUCE YOUR INTAKE

If you avoid processed foods and have a diet that is rich in veggies & fruits, you should be OK. A great time to consume fruit is immediately following your workout. A Recovery Shake can be a perfect finish to a hard workout and represent a natural source (3.5- 4 servings) of nutrient-dense skins, seeds and pulp from vine ripened fruit. Remember, not 1 gram of fruit sugars will be deposited on those hips or pesky love handles immediately following a workout. At that time, sugar is rushed back to muscles and is metabolized into Glycogen (stored sugar) NOT fat.

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