

YOUTH WRESTLING HYDRATION GUIDE

Evidence-Based Tournament Day Protocol

Dr. Sean Hashmi, MD, MS, FASN

Board-Certified Nephrologist & Obesity Medicine Specialist



THE STATS THAT MATTER

- 50-70% of youth athletes start practice ALREADY dehydrated
 - Just 2% body mass loss measurably impairs performance
 - 1.6 pounds of fluid loss in an 80lb wrestler = enough to swing a match
 - NEVER give energy drinks to athletes under 18
-



THE CLEAR HYDRATION SYSTEM

C - COLOR CHECK

- ✓ GOAL: Pale yellow urine (light lemonade color)
- ✗ WARNING: Dark yellow/amber = dehydrated
- 📊 TECHNICAL: Urine Specific Gravity (USG) ≤ 1.025

L - LIGHT, STEADY SIPPING

- ✓ AMOUNT: 6-10 ounces every 15-20 minutes
- ✓ WHY: Your stomach can only process 200-300ml optimally
- ✗ AVOID: Chugging large amounts at once

E - ELECTROLYTES WHEN NEEDED

- ✓ WHEN: Tournaments >2 hours OR hot conditions
- ✓ TARGET: 460-690mg sodium per liter
- ✓ SIMPLE: 14-20oz sports drink meets this target

A - AVOID ENERGY DRINKS

- ✗ NEVER: Energy drinks for athletes under 18
- ✗ RISKS: Heart palpitations, anxiety, dehydration
- ✗ FACT: 3-5x more caffeine than safe for teens

R - REPLACE POST-COMPETITION

- ✓ **FORMULA:** 150% of weight lost over 2-4 hours
 - ✓ **EXAMPLE:** Down 1 pound = drink 24oz over 2-4 hours
 - ✗ **AVOID:** Replacing all fluid at once
-



TOURNAMENT DAY TIMELINE

WAKE UP (6-7am)

- ☐ 8-12oz water immediately (before getting dressed)
- ☐ Check morning urine color
- ☐ Keep water bottle on nightstand

BREAKFAST (7-8am)

- ☐ 8oz with meal
- ☐ Light, easily digestible foods
- ☐ No caffeine for athletes under 16

TRAVEL TO VENUE (8-10am)

- ☐ 4-6oz every 30 minutes
- ☐ Sip, don't chug
- ☐ Bring electrolyte solutions

PRE-COMPETITION (10am-12pm)

- ☐ Continue 4-6oz every 30 minutes
- ☐ Last urine color check
- ☐ Switch to electrolytes if hot/long day

BETWEEN MATCHES

- ☐ 6-8oz every 15-20 minutes
- ☐ Use electrolyte solutions
- ☐ Monitor energy levels

POST-TOURNAMENT

- ☐ Weigh athlete if possible
- ☐ Replace 150% of weight lost
- ☐ Spread over 2-4 hours

☐ Include 3:1 carb:protein snack



MEDICAL RED FLAGS - SEEK HELP IMMEDIATELY

DEHYDRATION WARNING SIGNS:

- Dark amber urine
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Rapid heartbeat at rest
- Excessive fatigue between matches
- Headache or nausea

ENERGY DRINK TOXICITY:

- Heart palpitations
 - Chest pain
 - Severe anxiety
 - Vomiting or severe nausea
 - Difficulty breathing
-



SAFE WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

GOLDEN RULES:

- ✓ Maximum weight loss: 1.5% body weight per week
- ✓ Hydration testing required before setting min weights
- ✗ Never dehydrate for weigh-ins
- ✗ No fluid restrictions for weight cutting

POST WEIGH-IN PROTOCOL:

- Sip 6-10oz every 20 minutes with electrolytes
 - Never exceed 10-12oz at once (dilutes electrolytes)
 - Use sports drinks, not plain water
 - Start immediately after weigh-in
-

TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS

"My kid doesn't like water"

- Add lemon/lime slices
- Try room temperature vs ice cold
- Mix fruit in water
- Use diluted sports drinks (50/50 with water)

"They forget to drink"

- Set phone timer every 20 minutes
- Make hydration check-ins your job as parent
- Keep water bottle always visible
- Create pre-match hydration ritual

"Bathroom breaks during competition"

- Proper hydration reduces urgency
 - Kidneys work less when well-hydrated
 - Better one bathroom break than dehydrated matches
 - Plan breaks between brackets when possible
-

WHAT TO DRINK & WHEN

BEST CHOICES:

- ✓ Water (short tournaments, mild conditions)
- ✓ Diluted sports drinks (50% water, 50% sports drink)
- ✓ Electrolyte water (long/hot tournaments)

AVOID COMPLETELY:

- ✗ Energy drinks (Red Bull, Monster, etc.)
- ✗ High caffeine drinks (coffee, pre-workout)
- ✗ Carbonated sodas (can cause stomach discomfort)

POST-MATCH RECOVERY:

- ✓ 3:1 or 4:1 carb:protein ratio

- Banana + soy milk
 - Fruit smoothie with plant protein
 - Apple slices + almond butter
-

WHEN TO CONSULT A DOCTOR

IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION:

- Persistent vomiting
- Signs of heat exhaustion/heat stroke
- Heart palpitations or chest pain
- Severe dehydration symptoms

FOLLOW-UP CARE:

- Frequent kidney stones
 - Recurring UTIs in young athletes
 - Chronic fatigue despite proper nutrition
 - Blood in urine
-

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Tournament Day Emergency: _____

Family Doctor: _____

Nearest Hospital: _____

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Free Newsletter: selfprinciple.org/newsletter

More Youth Sports Content: selfprinciple.org/resources

Follow Dr. Hashmi: @seanhashmimd

MEDICAL DISCLAIMER: This information is for educational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. Always consult your healthcare provider for medical decisions. Individual results may

vary.

© 2025 Dr. Sean Hashmi, MD. For personal use only. Please share the resource link rather than redistributing this document.

VERSION 1.0 | Updated September 2025