

Energy drinks may give young sports teams an edge, study says

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Consuming energy drinks during team sports could help young people perform better, a study suggests.

Sports scientists found that 12-14 year olds can play for longer in team games when they drink an isotonic sports drink before and during games.

Researchers at the University of Edinburgh measured the performance of 15 adolescents during exercise designed to simulate the physical demands of team games such as football, rugby and hockey.

They showed for the first time that [sports drinks](#) helped the young people continue high intensity, stop-start activity for up to 24 per cent longer - compared with players who drank a non-carbohydrate placebo solution.

The study was conducted because there is increasing evidence of young people consuming commercially available [energy drinks](#) during team games and researchers wanted to assess their impact. The findings are published in the *European [Journal of Applied Physiology](#)*.

The findings showed that drinking a 6 per cent carbohydrate-electrolyte solution improved endurance capacity but did not make young people run faster during intermittent exercise in team sports.

The solution - containing carbohydrate, sodium, potassium, magnesium and calcium - enhances hydration, helps prevent dehydration and

provides a supply of energy to the body, thereby contributing to improved endurance capacity.

The researchers say the findings help to identify the importance of regular hydration and energy intake with a carbohydrate-electrolyte solution during games to replace fluids and provide energy in adolescent games players.

Dr John Sproule, Head of the Institute of Sport, Physical Education and Health Sciences of the University of Edinburgh's Moray House School of Education who led the research, said: "The importance of hydration to improve performance during exercise for adults is well known.

"This research helps us further understand how adolescents respond to hydration and energy supply during exercise.

"The consumption of a carbohydrate-electrolyte solution was found to significantly enhance endurance capacity during simulated games play, and this could contribute to improved performance in adolescents."

This is the first study to explore the effect of a 6 per cent carbohydrate-electrolyte solution, similar to the make-up of an isotonic sports drink, on the performance of [young people](#) in team games.

Provided by University of Edinburgh

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