

PRECISION™ HYDRATION

Why we replaced Gatorade with Precision Hydration

As you may have heard already, this year we're replacing Gatorade with Precision Hydration's electrolyte drinks at the Water Stops on course at The Woodlands Marathon.

Here's why...

1. It'll replace more of the electrolytes/fluids you lose in your sweat, helping you maintain your best performance for longer

Depending on the Gatorade product you choose, it contains around 250-500mg of sodium per liter, when mixed as directed. (Sodium is the key electrolyte when it comes to hydration).

But, the average person loses around 950mg of sodium per liter of sweat according to the thousands of Sweat Tests Precision Hydration have done on athletes of all shapes and sizes (including many pros in the NFL, NBA, MLB etc).

And everyone's different, with some athletes losing as little as 200mg/l whilst others lose more than 2,000mg/l!

That's why Precision Hydration offer electrolyte drinks in different strengths to match how *you* sweat and offer both a free online Sweat Test and an Advanced Sweat Test (available right here in The Woodlands via Andi McKinley) to help you personalize your hydration strategy.

The Water Stops will all have PH's low-calorie 1,000mg/l electrolyte drink available and the extra sodium in that will help you absorb and retain more fluid in your bloodstream, which reduces cardiovascular strain and fatigue and helps you perform at your best for longer. It might also help reduce the likelihood of you suffering from muscle cramp, if that's a common problem for you.

2. It'll absorb faster, hydrating you more effectively

The concentration ('tonicity') or 'thickness' of a sports drink affects how quickly you can absorb it into your blood stream to replace the fluids/electrolytes you're losing in your sweat.

Gatorade is 'isotonic', which means it's a similar 'thickness'/concentration to your blood.

Precision Hydration's electrolyte drinks are *hypotonic*, which means they're a lower concentration than your blood. The fluids in hypotonic drinks are absorbed into the bloodstream faster than isotonic drinks.

That's because the hypotonic formula creates something called a 'favourable osmotic gradient', so the water in them flows naturally across your gut wall into your blood vessels via osmosis (remember that from High School Biology?!).

And the fact that Precision Hydration also has more sodium in it than Gatorade also increases the rate of absorption through a mechanism called 'active transport'.

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So, when you're running a marathon in hot conditions, hypotonic drinks are a better option for hydration. And staying hydrated during The Woodlands Marathon is *really* important if you want to perform at your best.

3. It's less likely to give you GI / stomach issues

The concentration ('thickness') of a sports drink also affects how much energy (carbohydrate) it can provide you with.

Gatorade is a 6% carbohydrate drink and so it delivers a reasonable amount of energy along with some fluid and electrolytes. Gatorade is a bit of a 'jack of all trades' in this respect.

Whilst this sounds great on paper, in the real world isotonic drinks can also cause quite a lot of gastrointestinal upset - i.e. a sickly, bloated stomach - when consumed in large quantities (as is likely to be the case when you're running a marathon in the Texas heat and getting very thirsty).

As a result, isotonic drinks like Gatorade tend to be more useful for shorter duration, high intensity exercise where getting carbs in quickly can be more important than warding off dehydration.

We'll be offering Precision Hydration's low-calorie drinks at the Water Stops (but they do also have drink mixes with slightly more carbs in, albeit half the strength of Gatorade for the above reasons). These are much easier on the stomach in large volumes than isotonic drinks.

4. It'll give you more flexibility/control over your nutrition strategy

The problem with getting both your fluid/electrolytes and most (or all) of your energy from one drink (i.e. Gatorade) is that if you feel like you're dehydrated but you've got plenty of energy, you can't get the necessary fluids and electrolytes to rehydrate you back on board without also taking in unnecessary calories.

By offering Precision Hydration's low-calorie drinks and having energy gels at certain stops on the course, we're enabling you to separate your nutrition strategy from your hydration plan, which can help you avoid GI issues.

Of course, this does mean you can't rely on the on-course drinks for getting in the calories you'll need to perform at your best during the event, but here's some advice on how to get enough carbs on board to fuel your race in a more efficient manner than through your fluids...

How to fuel your Woodlands Marathon without Gatorade

1. Before the race: start topped up on glycogen

Increase the carb content of your diet slightly with an extra serving of bread/potatoes/pasta/rice with most meals in the 2-3 days before the race.

Take on an energy gel (or small, sugary snack) ~15 minutes before the gun goes off.

2. During the race: aim to take in ~45g-90g of carbs per hour

The current consensus is that taking in around 60g of carbohydrate per hour is optimal for most endurance athletes doing activities lasting around 2 to 4 hours.

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Think more like 40g/hr if you're a smaller person and not working at a high intensity, but maybe as high as 90g/hr if you're bigger and going really hard at it. This carbohydrate can come from a range of sources including bars, gels and 'real' foods (if their composition allows for easy consumption and digestion).

The energy gels available on course contain about 21-23g of carbs per gel. Carrying your own energy bars is another alternative, most contain as much as 35-40g per serving. If you prefer your carbs a bit more 'old school', then 10-12 small pieces of candy like Gummy Bears or Jelly Beans should contain about 60g, so this could do the trick.

Using more highly processed 'simple' sports nutrition products like gels or jelly chews along with PH drinks tends to work best because they reduce the amount of effort your body needs to put into chewing them, digesting them and getting the sugars into your blood stream. But, if you want to go 100% natural, bananas tend to contain around 25-30g of carbs per fruit.

We think offering Precision Hydration instead of Gatorade will help you perform at your best by helping you stay hydrated more effectively and decreasing the risk of race-ruining stomach issues.

Closer to the race itself we'll be sending you some advice on how to stay hydrated during The Woodlands Marathon but for now we hope this gives you the info you need to start planning your hydration and nutrition strategy for your Woodlands Marathon.

If you'd like to [try Precision Hydration 1000](#) in training (always recommended!) then you can use the code **EV-TWM** to get **15% off** your first order, or [email Andi McKinley](#) to arrange picking some up in person.