

## Nutrition Matters DOES COCONUT WATER HY

DOES COCONUT WATER HYDRATE
AS WELL AS GATORADE?

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n a word—no; it doesn't hydrate as well. But there are a few other

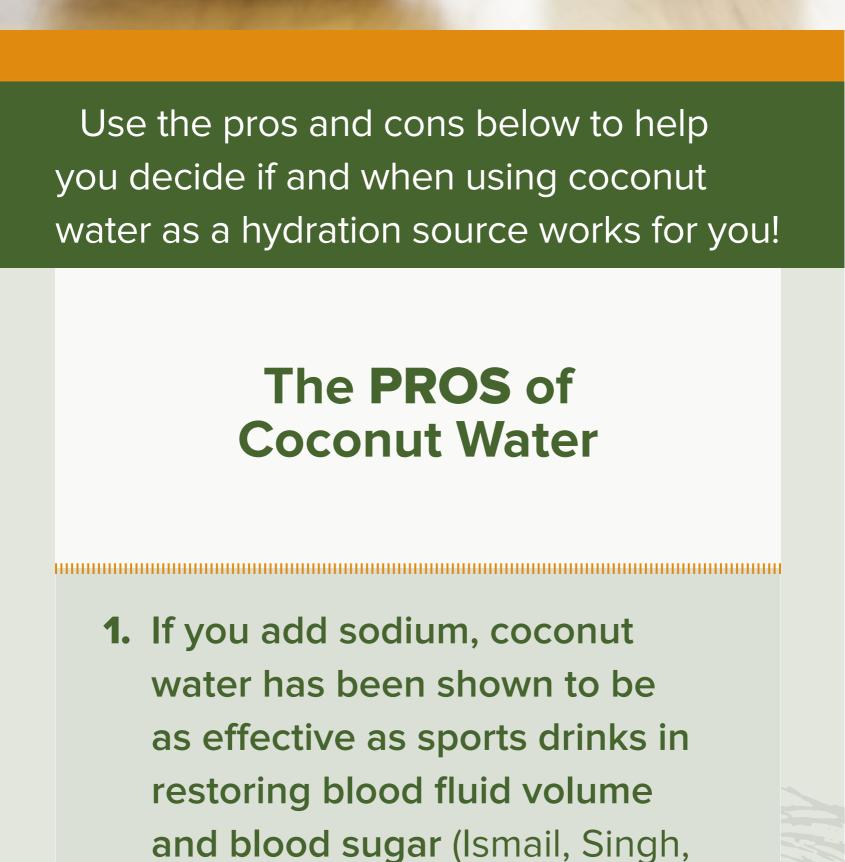
considerations that may influence

your decision on how and when you choose coconut water over conventional sports drinks or vice-versa. In answering this question, we should first consider that most ultimate players, especially at tournaments, are sweating almost all day. This varies a good deal among individuals, but generally, we start sweating during warm-ups and do not stop until the game or day is over. As we sweat, we lose valuable fluids as well as other important substances called electrolytes. Fluids and electrolytes must be replaced for performance to continue and can mean the difference in having the energy it takes to keep playing. Coconut water is a naturally occurring substance extracted from coconuts. It is made up of 94 percent water and several types of sugars, as well as other beneficial substances like vitamins (Yong, Ge, Ng, & Tan, 2009). Electrolytes

are small, charged particles in the

bloodstream that help the body manage

the flow of energy and waste in and out of cells. Replacing these electrolytes is essential to performance – even more important than replacing food. As we exercise at high intensities, waste is continuously being produced, and our cells need energy to continue the activity. The major electrolytes lost during exercise include sodium, potassium and chloride. Typical recommendations suggest replacing electrolytes during exercise longer than one hour, especially in the heat. But of course, there are large individual differences in how often and in what amounts you should replace electrolytes after an hour (American College of Sports Medicine et al., 2007). It is always best for each athlete to determine what works best for them.



& Sirisinghe, 2007).

According to the American College

on Exercise and Fluid Replacement

(2007), sodium is the most important

of Sports Medicine Position Stand

electrolyte to replace during

exercise, especially in the heat.

Sodium can come from sources

such as conventional snacks usually found at tournament fields, e.g., Cheez-Its, pretzels and potato chips. Celtic sea salt can also be added to coconut water to meet your sodium requirements. (American College of Sports Medicine et al., 2007).

2. Coconut water has the needed

shown to cause less upset

than sports drinks.

stomach during rehydration

The amount of sugar in Gatorade is

known to be too high for continuous

intake and must be watered down

for most athletes to avoid a crash

ideal during exercise lasting more

than an hour). Coconut water has

(a 6-8 percent sugar solution is

amount of sugar but has been

enough sugar to replace needs and has been shown in some studies to cause less bloating and upset stomach (Kalman, Feldman, Krieger, and Bloomer, 2012), (Ismail et al., 2007), (Saat, Singh, Sirisinghe, and Nawawi, 2002).

3. Coconut water does not have dyes or a proprietary patent on the exact formulations of electrolytes, so you can see what is actually in the product and know that it is not harmful to you.

Coconut water is a natural product

natural B vitamins, cancer-fighting

substances called cytokinins, and

phytohormones that support the

good kind of cell growth. In contrast,

Gatorade is specially formulated for

athletes under extreme conditions

other harmful chemicals we do not

The CONS of

**Coconut Water** 

but may also include dyes and

know about.

with many other benefits and

uses (Yong et al., 2009). It has

1. Coconut water may have an unfamiliar or bad taste to athletes who are not used to it.

It is very important to have fluids that taste good so that you drink enough. Ideally, those fluids also have what you need in them. If you do not like the taste of coconut water, Gatorade or Powerade are good choices if you are willing to accept the risk of added dyes or if you have limited exposure.

The sugars in Gatorade, including dextrose, are easier to absorb quickly than the glucose, fructose

and sucrose found in coconut water

drinks may be the better alternative.

2. In order to make it taste better

and be a functional hydration

may need to modified and/or

Many proponents of coconut water

are either used to or like the taste,

but others may find it unappetizing.

If you want to drink coconut water

drinks, you may find you need to add

sodium, which may be inconvenient

and unrealistic for ultimate players

at tournaments. Sodium is the most

important nutrient to replace during

exercise, but coconut water has five

instead of conventional sports

juice or flavored water, as well as

supplemented.

fluid for athletes, coconut water

(Ben Sit, R). There may be some

circumstances when you need

calories right away, and sports

times more potassium than sodium.
Conventional sports drinks have
twice the sodium as potassium (Ben
Sit, R). Even though sodium is not
typically a concern in the American
diet, some athletes may need higher
amounts on tournament days due to
individual differences in sweat rates
and sodium content in their diets.

3. Because sports drinks are
specially formulated, they
already contain the necessary
sodium and can stand alone as

a fluid and calorie replacement

during high-intensity exercise.

With sports drinks, you know you

are getting everything you need in

one place. Since the formulas are

patented and we don't know the

exact ingredients or amounts, you

may be receiving additional benefits

from the fluids and electrolytes and

their proportions. As is the case

with many conventional foods,

convenience may outweigh the

negatives. Under certain conditions,

especially when no other choice is

used with a convenient, accessible

source is the most important priority.

available, replacing what is being

Conclusions

There are pros and cons to coconut water as a choice for hydration during training and while playing ultimate.

Although pure coconut water does not have enough sodium to replace what is lost by itself, it can easily be adapted to meet sodium needs. It also has other health benefits whereas conventional sports drinks have chemicals and substances known to be harmful. Some situations may call for one or the other as the

better choice, so just keep all the

available information in mind, and

most importantly, stay hydrated!

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