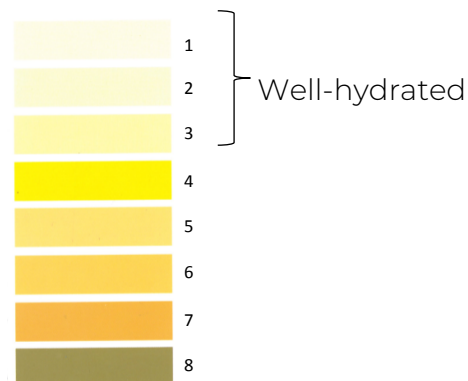


## Is my child drinking enough?

A large proportion of our body is water but the exact amount is constantly changing due to water loss (breathing, sweating, and urine) and intake (food and fluid). To work out if your child is considered appropriately hydrated, you can consider the following monitoring methods.

You could encourage your child to monitor the colour of their urine first thing in the morning. Using the colour chart, your child should aim for urine that is a light straw colour (1-3). This indicates they are appropriately hydrated. If their urine is darker, they should consider consuming more fluids across the day. Often an increase in fluid consumption (approximately 500 – 1000ml per day) and/or improved availability of fluids (e.g., having access to fluid in the car or at school/training) can help improve hydration status.



During exercise, sweat is produced in an attempt to maintain body temperature. The amount of sweat lost is dependent on many factors, which means sweat loss varies even in children participating in the same session. Some current guidelines advise drinking to thirst to prevent dehydration, while others encourage athletes to individualise their fluid consumption strategies. One way for your child to individualise their drinking strategy is to monitor changes in body mass from pre to post exercise because any changes in body mass will likely be due to sweat loss (rather than changes in body composition). It is encouraged that athletes minimise dehydration to no greater than 2% of body mass (i.e., their change in body mass after training/competing is no more than 2% of their pre-exercise body mass).

**But,** It is important to remember that such body mass monitoring should only be completed once or twice during a season (typically in the most popular training session) to help guide fluid ingestion,

It is also important to remember your child can drink too much and this can also negatively impact health and performance. Unfortunately some of the symptoms of over drinking (e.g., nausea, headaches, confusion) are difficult to distinguish from dehydration. But, a useful indicator is that your child should not gain weight during training/competition.

How to calculate dehydration (% BM):

$$\frac{\text{Pre-exercise body mass (kg)} - \text{Post exercise body mass (kg)}}{\text{Pre-exercise body mass (kg)} \times 100}$$