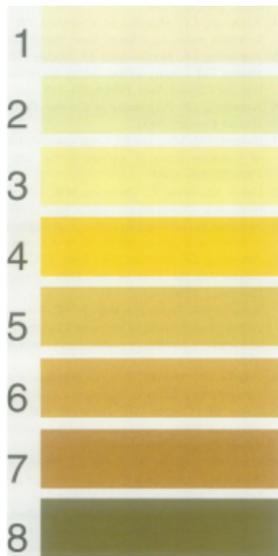


REFUELING RACE CAR DRIVERS

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#1, 2 or 3, you are hydrated.

#4, 5 or 6, you are mildly to moderately dehydrated.

#7 or darker, you are dehydrated.

As race car drivers get ready to start their engines for the 2019 racing season, they may want to consider fueling their bodies, too. Staying hydrated is essential for both performance and safety during any physical activity, including driving a race car. Drivers experience increased physiological challenges while racing: increased metabolic work, G-force exposure, heat stress, cardiovascular strain, and potential fluid losses. Athletes who lose as little as 2% to 3% of their body mass as a result of dehydration will experience a decline in performance, including decreased endurance, increased fatigue, and altered thermoregulatory capability. Dehydration in hot environments has been suggested to cause deficits in cognitive function (mental alertness, concentration, and visuomotor tracking), increases in body temperature and heart rate, and increased risk for heat illness.

Recommendations for fluid depends on the intensity and duration of activity, individual's body size, and the environmental conditions. There is a plethora of hydration information for other sports, though more research is needed to determine the best strategy to meet the demands of driving a race car. As with any activity, it is best to match fluid intake with sweat losses, and never drink more than the fluids lost.

So how do you monitor your hydration status with exercise, or in this case, driving a race car? One simple way is by comparing your urine color to a Urine Color Chart (see in left margin). The rule of thumb is when your urine looks like lemonade, you are hydrated. The more the urine looks like apple juice, the more dehydrated you are. Thirst is another way to assess hydration; however, do not wait until you are thirsty, because thirst is usually indicative of a 1% to 2% body water loss. To avoid dehydration, consume water before, during, and following activity. Rehydration following exercise, or racing, should occur within 2 hours of the checkered flag and it is dependent on body mass loss. For every 2.2 pounds of body mass loss, one liter of fluid is needed.

Stay hydrated, my friends. ~Doc C

