

Kyle

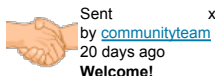
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# Stack on Sports

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## A new sports drink -- coconut water

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Written by [kylestack](#) on 07/18/2010 12:10:36 PM

NFL players are always looking for a dietary edge to elevate their on-field performance. With supplements sagging in popularity because of the difficulty in finding a product which is free of banned ingredients, food and drink sources are in more demand than ever.

The dietary item to discuss this week is one which only followers of the television series *Lost* might come up with -- coconut water. According to Roberta Anding, a sports dietitian for the NFL's Houston Texans, the drink has grown in popularity since it's a terrific source of potassium.

"Potassium is needed for muscular contraction, and it replaces a small amount of sweat," says Anding, who doubles as a sports dietitian at Memorial Hermann Healthcare System in Houston. She has sodium-fortified the drink for her players so that they can use it as a sports drink replacement to Gatorade and other over-sweet alternatives.

"When someone has electrolyte deficiency, it's a sodium deficiency, not potassium," Anding says. "That's one of the reasons why we sodium-fortify it."

And since the water doesn't taste as sweet as most sports drinks, the players prefer to have it mixed into smoothies. Anding notes that even though nutritional information online states that coconut water has roughly 250 mg of sodium per serving, she's only seen the coconut water products with 20 mg of sodium per serving in grocery stores.

Here is one more tidbit for those unconvinced at the effectiveness of coconut water: According to Anding, rumor has it that three-time Olympic gold medalist sprinter Usain Bolt uses it regularly in his dietary regimen. While NFL players can't obtain Bolt's speed simply through osmosis by drinking coconut water, it has provided them a new way to consume potassium and hydrate at the same time.

Any effort to provide athletes with healthy nutritional alternatives to supplements should be welcomed. If it also keeps players on the field by eliminating the possibility of a suspension for violating a banned substance, then that's an action I will always support. Stay tuned for more NFL dietary trends from Anding through the next couple weeks.

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