

## Do You Believe Any of These Myths?

Are you looking for ways to improve your performance? Most athletes, no matter what their special event, will do almost anything to achieve an edge over their competitors.

**\*MYTH** - Drinking water during exercise causes an upset stomach and slows you down.

There is no evidence that water taken during exercise causes an upset stomach or any other problem. In fact, consumption of water is very important because it helps replace body fluids lost as sweat. Drink 1 to 1 1/2 cups of water 15 minutes before running and 1/2 cup every 10-15 minutes during competition or practice.

**\*MYTH** - Muscle cramps are caused by inadequate salt intake.

Cramps are due to severe loss of water through sweating. Drinking adequate amounts of water before, during and after exercise can prevent this water loss. Salt tablets can aggravate this condition by drawing more water out of the muscles and into the stomach. Normal salt intake during eating should replace the small amount of salt lost by sweating.

**\*MYTH-** A candy bar, honey or soft drink before exercising will provide a source of quick energy.

Although sugar from these items will enter the body quickly, it can cause fatigue, hunger and dizziness. Large amounts of insulin are released to clear the blood of excess glucose, causing a rapid drop in blood sugar. Don't eat an hour or less before competition. If you exercise with food in your stomach, you may get an upset stomach.

**\*MYTH** - Vitamins will give you more energy.

None of the vitamins provide energy. Although some vitamins are needed to produce energy from the foods you eat, these vitamins are easily supplied by a normal diet. Megadoses of vitamins won't give you more energy or improve your performance.

**\*MYTH** - Amphetamines can improve sports performance.

Amphetamines (pep or diet pills) do not increase the amount of available energy or improve your performance. They do, however, hide fatigue and dull pain, which may result in injury to

the body. Other side effects are a rise in blood pressure, breathing rate, metabolism and blood sugar. They can cause headaches, dizziness and confusion.

For more information about nutrition and fitness, contact your county home economist.

In New Castle County, call 451-1239 or 571-2284; in Kent County, call 697-4000 or 736-5156; in Sussex County, call 856-7303.