Hydration Guidelines for Walkers

- **Plain Water:** For walks of an hour or less, plain water is the best drink.
- **Add Salt:** When your walk is going to be longer than an hour, a sports drink or salty foods such as pretzels can help with water absorption in the body as well as replacement of salt and energy.
- **Drink Before You Walk:** Prepare for your walk by drinking a tall glass of water (17 ounces or 500 mL) 2 hours before your walk. This will allow time for any extra to pass through your body before you hit the trail.
- **Caffeine:** Avoid caffeinated beverages before your walk, they cause you to lose fluid, making you thirstier as well as making you take inconvenient stops along the way.
- **Salt Before a Long Walk:** Before long walks, have a bit of extra salt with your meal or snack so you will have enough sodium to stay in balance.
- **Plan for More Water:** Carry water with you or plan for water stops along the route where you will be able to get a full drink of a cup of water every 20 minutes. A water fountain may not be able to deliver enough water for you to get a full cup.
- **Drink When Thirsty:** Older guidelines said to drink before you are thirsty, but new guidelines by USATF in 2003 for long distance runners and walkers say to use thirst as a guide and to drink when thirsty.
- **Drinking When Sweating:** If you are sweating more than usual, drink more than usual.
- **High Altitude:** You lose even more fluids at high altitudes, in heat and low humidity and need to drink more than usual. Again, let thirst be your guide and drink as soon as thirsty.
- **Flavor Your Water:** Make your water taste good so you will want to drink more. Add a squirt of lemon and keep it cool.
- **Drinking After Your Walk:** After your walk, end with another tall drink of water. After a long walk, do not overdo on plain water, use sports drink and/or salty foods to replenish salts as well.

**Source:** Lewis G. Maharam, MD.FACSM (chair), Tamara Hew DPM, Arthur Siegel MD, Marv Adner, MD, Bruce Adams, MD and Pedro Pujol, MD, FACSM. "IMMDA's Revised Fluid Recommendations for Runners and Walkers." IMMDA. 6 May 2006.