

Hot Topic:

CARBOHYDRATES AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

“The clear message from over a half a century of research on the links between food, nutrition and exercise capacity is that next to natural talent and appropriate training, a high carbohydrate diet and adequate fluid intake to avoid dehydration are the two most important elements in the formula for successful participation in sport.”¹

Staying healthy requires a combination of physical activity and optimal nutrition. Follow these guidelines on how to stay active and make the best food choices to energize your workout and reach your fitness goals.

GET MOVING

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommend adults:

- Perform at least 150 minutes of aerobic physical activity each week in sessions of 10 minutes or longer². Examples of activities include:
 - Bike riding
 - Dancing
 - Walking, jogging or running
 - Swimming
- Participate in muscle and bone strengthening activities at least twice a week³, such as:
 - Weight lifting
 - Push-ups
 - Sit-ups
 - Yoga

From the paleo diet to gluten-free lifestyle, many trends encourage avoidance or reduction of certain carbohydrate-rich foods. But, carbohydrates are actually the most essential ingredient of an active lifestyle⁴. Carbohydrates help⁵:

- Provide energy to fuel your activity and increase longevity of workout
- Prevent and delay hunger while replenishing glycogen (carbs stored in the body and used as energy when needed)



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According to the American College of Sports Medicine, athletes who restrict energy intake, eliminate whole food groups from their diet, or consume low-carbohydrate diets are at greatest risk of nutrient deficiencies⁶. So be sure to add the following to your diet to energize your routine:

- Grains: bread, pasta, cereal, brown rice, bagels
- Vegetables
- Fruit
- Milk and yogurt
- Legumes: beans and lentils

Which foods contain carbohydrates?

- Grains: bread, pasta, cereal, bagels
- Vegetables
- Fruit
- Milk and yogurt
- Legumes (beans and lentils)

FUEL UP BEFORE YOUR WORKOUT

Never exercise on an empty stomach. Instead, enjoy a small meal one or two hours before your workout. It should be rich in carbohydrates with a smaller portion of protein⁷. Eating before activity will improve your performance and fitness results⁸. Avoid fried and fatty foods, high fibre items, and carbonated drinks⁹.

Try one of these delicious options before you begin your physical activity:

- Oatmeal with nuts and blueberries
- Cereal with milk and strawberries
- Peanut butter and banana sandwich
- Crackers, cheese and an apple

DURING YOUR ACTIVITY

Stay hydrated throughout your workout by taking small sips of water. For activities longer than an hour try a sports drink, orange, apple, bananas or raisins for an easy pick-me-up¹⁰. The carbohydrates in these foods assist in maintaining your normal blood sugar and help you exercise longer with greater intensity¹¹.

POST-WORKOUT EATS

After physical activity, keep hydrated with water and refuel with a balance meal or snack. Consume carbohydrates such as grains within 30 minutes of your workout to replace muscle glycogen and ensure rapid recovery¹².

Here are some post work out carbohydrates and protein sample pairings that can help build and repair muscle tissue:¹³

- Nut, grain and seed energy bar and a banana
- Tuna and tomato sandwich on whole grain bread
- Fruit smoothie bowl with Greek yogurt, granola and nuts
- Whole grain English muffin with scrambled eggs and leafy greens
- Granola bar and glass of milk
- Whole grain bagel and peanut butter



For more information and links to the full studies, please visit www.HealthyGrains.ca.

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For more information about heart disease and diabetes see:
www.heartandstroke.ca
www.diabetes.ca