

Nutrition for Runners

Food is Fuel

- Proper nutrition is essential for optimal performance and recovery.
- Breakfast jump starts your metabolism for the day.
 - If you're a morning runner, try eating a little bit before you run (light on fiber, protein, and fat), then eat your regular breakfast after your workout.
- "Carbohydrate" isn't a dirty word! Carbs replace the body's glycogen, which is the primary source of fuel used during runs.
- Look to the MyPlate model for balanced meals and snacks, regardless of size.
- For most people, a well-balanced diet provides plenty of nutrients. Always speak with a qualified healthcare provider before taking nutrition supplements.



Hydration

- Hydrate before, during, and after runs. Focus on water!
 - 12-16 oz before, 2-4 oz every 15 minutes, sip 16-24 oz after.
- On especially hot days or for runs exceeding 60 minutes, try an electrolyte replacement during or after your workout.

Before you run...

- Don't run with your tank on empty!
- 4+ hours before: eat a normal, well-balanced meal. Include some fat and fiber, but too much of either can cause discomfort during your run.
- 2-4 hours before: try a snack totaling 200-400 calories such as a light sandwich, granola or oatmeal with fruit and splash of milk, or vegetables and crackers with 2-3 Tbsp hummus.
- 1 hour before: have a small snack totaling about 100 calories containing mostly carbohydrates such as 1 cup of cereal, serving of fruit, or piece of toast with fruit spread or low-fat hummus.

On the run...

- During workouts lasting an hour or more, consume 30-60 grams of carbs during the run.
- Gatorade or gels/blocks/beans followed by water usually do the trick.
 - For a 3-5 hour marathon, aim for 15-30 grams of carbs about every 10K.

After you run...

- Refuel! Eat a mix of mostly complex carbs and some protein. Try low-fat chocolate milk, a granola bar, small sandwich, or a banana with peanut butter.
- Following long runs choose a well-balanced meal with a focus on complex carbs.