

The Facts on Sports and Exercise

Five Key nutrition principles

1. Eat a varied and well-balanced diet that supplies the right amount of energy and essential nutrients
2. Choose a variety of food including foods that contain carbohydrates based on the amount of exercise you are doing a
3. Eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day – fresh, frozen, dried and canned all count
4. Refuel with carbohydrate foods and fluids as soon as possible after exercising
5. Ensure you are well-hydrated by drinking throughout the day as well as before, during and after exercise



Carbohydrates

- No matter what your sport, carbohydrates are vital for your best performance. Exercising muscles rely on carbohydrates as this main source of fuel
- If you are involved in moderate and high-volume training then you will need greater amounts of carbohydrate
- A diet low in carbohydrate can lead to a lack of energy during exercise, early fatigue, loss of concentration and delayed recovery
- Carbohydrate is stored in muscles as glycogen. The body's stores of glycogen are limited and need to be topped up
- 2-3 hours before exercise you should have a carbohydrate snack or light meal. After exercise you should replenish your glycogen stores with a carbohydrate snack such as:

1 x large banana	1 large bowl of breakfast cereal
2 x cereal bars	1 portion of cooked pasta/rice
15 dried apricots	1 large potato
2 slices of bread (toast/sandwich)	500ml fruit juice

Protein

- Protein is required for building and repairing muscle
- One of the biggest myths is that eating large amounts of protein = big muscles.
- Providing you eat a healthy diet, enough protein will be in your diet to meet your requirements unless you are involved in high volume, high intensity training
- If you do not eat enough carbohydrates, then protein will be used by your body as an energy source, which will lead to lower energy levels and make it difficult for you to perform at your best

Fats

- Fats are essential for producing and stimulating hormones, brain cells and healthy skin. It also provides protection for the organs in our bodies. Good sources of monounsaturated fats include olive, rapeseed, groundnut and almond oils, avocado, olives, nuts and seeds.

Fluids

- Adequate hydration is essential for performance. Being dehydrated can affect both physical and mental performance. It is important to start each training session with being well hydrated and to take appropriate fluids during training. It is also important to rehydrate after activity to replace the water and salts lost as sweat.

Summary

- It is crucial to get your food and fluid intake right if you want to exercise properly and recover quicker
- Eat the right amount of food for your activity levels
- Make sure you eat a range of foods to meet the 'five' key nutrition principles above