

Fast Facts About _____

Sports Nutrition

Water, Water Everywhere

You can survive for a month without food, but only a few days without water.

- ✓ Water is the most important nutrient for active people.
- ✓ When you sweat, you lose water, which must be replaced. Drink fluids before, during, and after workouts.
- ✓ Water is a fine choice for most workouts. However; during continuous workouts of greater than 90 minutes, your body may benefit from a sports drink.
- ✓ Sports drinks have two very important ingredients - electrolytes and carbohydrates
- ✓ Sports drinks replace electrolytes lost through sweat during workouts lasting several hours.
- ✓ Carbohydrates in sports drinks provide extra energy. The most effective sports drinks contain 15 to 18 grams of carbohydrate in every 8 ounces of fluid.

Rev up Your Engine with Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are your body's main source of energy.

- ✓ Carbohydrates are sugars and starches, and they are found in foods such as breads, cereals, fruits, vegetables, pasta, milk, honey, syrups and table sugar.
- ✓ Sugars and starches are broken down by your body into glucose, which is used by your muscles for energy.
- ✓ For health and peak performance, more than half your daily calories should come from carbohydrates.
- ✓ Sugars and starches have 4 calories per gram, while fat has 9 calories per gram. In other words, carbohydrates have less than half the calories of fat.
- ✓ If you regularly eat a carbohydrate-rich diet you probably have enough carbohydrate stored to fuel activity. Even so, be sure to eat a precompetition meal for fluid and additional energy. What you eat as well as when you eat your precompetition meal will be entirely individual.

Flexing Your Options to Build Bigger Muscles

It is a myth that eating lots of protein and/or taking protein supplements and exercising vigorously will definitely turn you into a big, muscular person.

- ✓ Building muscle depends on your genes, how hard you train, and whether you get enough calories.
- ✓ The average American diet has more than enough protein for muscle building. Extra protein is eliminated from the body or stored as fat.

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Score with Vitamins and Minerals

Eating a varied diet will give you all the vitamins and minerals you need for health and peak performance.

- ✓ Exceptions include active people who follow strict vegetarian diets, avoid an entire group of foods, or eat less than 1800 calories a day. If you fall into any of these categories, a multivitamin and mineral pill may provide the vitamins and minerals missing in your diet.
- ✓ Taking large doses of vitamins and minerals will not help your performance and may be bad for your health. Vitamins and minerals do not supply the body with energy and, therefore are not a substitute for carbohydrates.

Popeye and All That Spinach

Iron supplies working muscles with oxygen.

- ✓ If your iron level is low, you may tire easily and not have enough stamina for activity.
- ✓ The best sources of iron are animal products, but plant foods such as fortified breads, cereals, beans and green leafy vegetables also contain iron.
- ✓ Iron supplements may have side effects, so take them only if your doctor tells you to.

No Bones About It, You Need Calcium Everyday

Many people do not get enough of the calcium needed for strong bones and proper muscle function.

- ✓ Lack of calcium can contribute to stress fractures and the bone disease, osteoporosis.
- ✓ The best sources of calcium are dairy products, but many other foods such as salmon with bones, sardines, collard greens, and okra also contain calcium. Additionally, some brands of bread, tofu, and orange juice are fortified with calcium.

A Weighty Matter

Your calorie needs depend on your age, body size, sport and training program.

- ✓ The best way to make sure you are not getting too many or too few calories is to check your weight from time to time.
- ✓ If you're keeping within your ideal weight range, you're probably getting the right amount of calories.

This health education material has been favorably reviewed by the
American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation.