Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are the main source of fuel that powers your body.

Eating the right amount of carbohydrates can increase your energy level and improve you performance. Your muscles need carbohydrates to fuel your activity.

Did you know? Eating carbohydrates after a workout speeds up your muscles recovery time. Plan to add special carbohydrate snacks after a workout to replace what you burned.

Consuming carbohydrates after a workout will not only help you recover faster from that workout but it will increase your energy stores and may make you feel less tired and fatigued.

How many carbs do you need after a workout?
After a workout/practice lasting longer than 90 minutes you will need 0.5-1.0 grams of carbohydrate x your body weight in pounds. It is important to eat that snack within 15-30 minutes of finishing your workout. Follow with the same amount of carbs every 2 hours. If you workout less than 90 minutes, subtract 25-50% of the carbs for your snack.

The main source of carbohydrates is found in the bread, cereal, rice, and pasta group, but carbohydrates can also come from fruits, vegetables, and sweets.

Ways to make carbs a part of your day:
- use instant hot cereals for a quick breakfast choice
- burritos, pasta, and rice bowls are easy for lunch
- tuck a granola bar in your backpack for “on the run” fuel
- add rolls, bread, or cornbread to your dinner meal
- cereal is good for a quick carbohydrate snack
- add veggies to lunch and snack in order to get 3-5 servings/day
- sprinkle dried fruit on cereal and yogurt, puddings, or ice cream
- try fruit smoothies for a snack or a quick breakfast
Protein

Protein plays an important role in cell growth and repair. It also helps your body recover from injury and sports related stress. Protein helps maintain your muscle mass, build and repair tissue, and provides some energy.

*Protein supplements are rarely needed since most people already consume more than enough protein in their diet.

Protein foods are found primarily in the meat and dairy food groups.

Excellent sources of protein include: lean beef, pork, chicken, turkey, tofu, nuts, fish, eggs, peanut butter, and dried beans.

Fats

Fat is something our body needs but our body does not require large amounts. An extremely low-fat diet, however, is very unhealthy and will inhibit your performance.

Athletes actually burn fat as a fuel during exercise. Fat provides a source of calories specifically for long-term exercise (i.e. endurance events)

Fats should be included in your food choices as part of a healthy diet. No one should eat more than 25-30 grams of fat per day.

Types of fat:
1. Monounsaturated fat is the best option- found in olives, nuts, avocados, olive oil, peanut oil, canola oil. These foods do contain a concentrated source of calories but your body does not use this type of fat to make cholesterol.
2. Polyunsaturated fats are a good option- found in vegetables oils such as corn, soy, and safflower. You body also does not use this type of fat to make cholesterol.
3. Saturated fats are the fats that should be limited in the diet- found in meat, butter, lard, coconut oil, palm oil, and palm kernel oil. Your body uses these fats to make artery-clogging cholesterol.