



A Winning Eating Plan

Choosing a variety of foods from each food group from Canada’s Food Guide is important for a winning eating plan. Choose at least the minimum recommended number of servings from each food group every day (see table below). These recommendations are for people who are not very active. Most athletes need to eat more than the recommended number of servings if they are training on a daily basis, feeling hungry or losing weight.

- Choose more servings from the **Vegetables & Fruit** and **Grain Products** food groups to get the carbohydrates you need to fuel your body for sports. Foods from these groups should cover about 2/3 to 3/4 of your plate.
- The **Milk & Alternatives** group provides the nutrients needed to build strong bones and teeth. They are also an important source of protein.
- Foods from the **Meat & Alternatives** group are high in protein and are key sources of iron. Female athletes, distance runners and vegetarian athletes may be low in iron, which can affect their concentration, energy, and performance.

Age (years)	9-13	14-18	14-18
Sex	Males & Females	Females	Males
Vegetables & Fruit	6	7	8
Grain Products	6	6	7
Milk & Alternatives	3-4	3-4	3-4
Meat & Alternatives	1-2	2	3



Visit Health Canada’s website www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide to create a personalized “My Food Guide”.

Drink or Slow Down

Most athletes do not drink enough fluids to keep their bodies operating at peak performance levels. Thirst is not a good indicator of the amount of fluid that your body needs during intense activity.

You will need more fluids with activity, on hot days and if you sweat a lot. Drink before, during and after your event or practice.

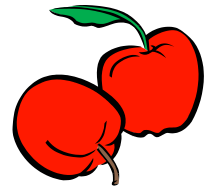
- ✓ At least 4 hours before exercise, drink about 1½ to 2 glasses of water
- ✓ Take water breaks every 15-20 minutes during your event or practice
- ✓ Keep drinking fluids after you’ve finished exercising

Sport Drinks

- For activities that last for one hour or less, water is usually the best choice.
- You may need a drink that has 6-8% carbohydrate (6-8 grams/100 ml) if: you haven’t eaten much before exercising; it’s hot out; your activity is intense and lasts longer than one hour.
- Make your own sports drink by mixing: 500 ml 100% juice, 250 ml water and a pinch (0.5 ml) salt.

Pre-event meals and snacks

Start your activity with fully charged batteries to make sure that your mind and body are ready to go. Your cell phone doesn't perform well when the batteries are low and neither do you. Give your body time to digest the food before an event.



Athletes will vary in the amounts of food and timing of meals that can be digested easily before events. It's important to eat foods that are easy to digest (usually lower in fibre and fat) high in carbohydrate and moderate in protein. Practice your meal plans so that when you have an important event or tournament, you know what works for you. Here's a guide for the timing of meals before an event to get you started:

- Large meals – 3 or more hours
- Smaller meal – 2-3 hours
- Small snack or blender/liquid meal – 1-2 hours

Refuelling After Activity

It takes 24-48 hours to refuel your muscles completely after intense activity.

If you have 2 or more events in a day, you need to refuel and repair your muscles by choosing foods with carbohydrates and protein. Try to eat these foods within the first 15-30 minutes or at least within 2 hours after your event when your muscles are ready to soak up the carbohydrate and protein. Aim for 1-1.5 g carbohydrate per kg body weight (divide your weight in pounds by 2 to get a rough estimate of your weight in kg). Read the Nutrition Facts table on food packages to find good sources of carbohydrate and protein.



Examples of carbohydrate and protein foods for between or right after events:

- yogurt, granola bar, juice, fruit, flavoured milk

These types of foods are often not available at fields, rinks or gyms so remember to bring food with you as part of your equipment.

Supplements

- Most athletes do not need to supplement their diet if they are following the guidelines provided in this handout. For example, whey protein (protein powder) does not increase muscle mass unless your diet is low in protein. This is not the case for most Canadians.
- Steroid use is linked to many negative consequences including acne, premature balding, increased aggression and breast enlargement in males. Training, adequate rest and sleep, and a healthy diet are needed to build muscle mass and reach your peak level of performance.
- Talk to a dietitian if you have questions about specific supplements.

For more information contact:

- SportMedBC (sport nutrition page) www.sportmedbc.com
- HealthLinkBC – www.healthlinkbc.ca, phone 811, easy access to non-emergency health information and services, ask to speak to a dietitian for healthy eating advice
- Australian Institute of Sport www.ausport.gov.au/ais/nutrition
- Dietitians of Canada www.dietitians.ca

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