Carbohydrates and Physical Activity

Food - Fuel - Fun

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High intensity and long duration activities require adequate amounts of carbohydrate, determined by body weight and the time of consumption.

Carbohydrates can be found in both foods & beverages, in the form of starches, sugars, or fibres.

Starches and sugars contribute to the glucose supply in the body.

Carbohydrates are the most efficient fuel source for the body. During exercise, the body uses glucose from the blood and uses limited glycogen stores from the muscle and liver as fuel.

Hydration with water is essential. As physical activity intensity and duration increases, consuming adequate amounts of carbohydrates is critical for optimal health and performance.

Hydrate with water

• Non-competitive activity or
• Light - moderate intensity less than 1 hour

Activities might include: walking, dancing for fun, light biking, gardening, chores

Hydrate with water and refuel with carbohydrate

• High intensity / endurance activities lasting longer than 1-1.5 hours
• Activities in hot humid conditions
• Increased perspiration

Activities might include: competitive sports, tournaments, challenging run / swim, fast cycling


Find activities that are fun for you, and fuel with foods and beverages as needed!

For more information, visit sugar.ca