



Eating well is key to supporting every athlete’s training program. The choices you make every day about what and how much to eat directly affect your performance. Choose a variety of foods from each food group from Canada’s Food Guide for a winning eating plan.

Along with plenty of fluids, aim to eat 3 balanced meals and 3-4 snacks throughout the day.

- The **Vegetables & Fruit** and **Grain Products** food groups give you the carbohydrates you need to fuel your body. Food from these groups should cover about $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of your plate.
- Food from the **Milk & Alternatives** group helps build strong bones and teeth. They are also an important source of protein.
- Food 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 energy, concentration, and performance.

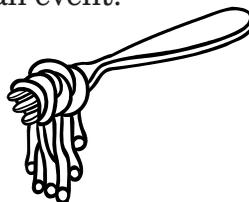
Planning Meals and Snacks

Start your activity with “fully charged batteries” to make sure that your mind and body are ready to go.

Athletes vary in when and how much they prefer to eat before training and events. It is important to eat foods that are easy to digest (usually lower in fibre and fat), and include carbohydrate and small amounts of protein. Practice your meal plans so that when you have an important event, you know what works for you.

Here is a guide for the timing of meals before an event:

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



A Winning Eating Plan

Balanced Breakfast	Loaded Lunches	Designer Dinners	Superior Snacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrambled eggs, toast, fruit, milk • Peanut butter or cheese on bagel, fruit, vegetable juice • Whole grain cereal, milk, fruit, nuts or seeds, water • Oatmeal, yogurt, raisins, nuts, water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole wheat pita sandwich with turkey or humus and veggies, carrot sticks, milk, granola bar • Multi grain crackers, cheese, apple, oat cookies, milk • Roast beef sandwich, whole wheat bread, fruit salad, yogurt, water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole wheat spaghetti with meat sauce, salad, fruit crisp, milk or water • Baked salmon, baked potato, steamed vegetables, rice pudding, milk or water • Stir-fry with meat, chicken or tofu, brown rice, yogurt with fruit, water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheese and crackers • Trail mix • Yogurt and granola • Half or full sandwich • Banana and peanut butter • Veggies and dip • Homemade smoothie • Small, homemade muffin

For more information visit the healthycanadians.gc.ca website.

Refuelling After Activity

It takes 24–48 hours to refuel your muscles completely after intense activity. To refuel and repair your muscles, choose foods with carbohydrates and protein. Try to eat these foods within the first 15–30 minutes and again within 2 hours after your event to help increase your speed of recovery.

Use the table above to help plan meals and snacks.

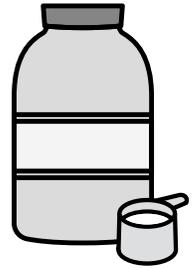
Remember, pack food and drinks with you as part of your equipment.



Supplements:

Most athletes do not need supplements; adequate training, sleep and a healthy diet is the best way to optimize performance.

- **Protein:** Food sources are more cost effective than supplements. Whey protein (protein powder) does not increase muscle mass unless your diet is low in protein. Most Canadians get more than enough protein in their diet without supplements.
- **Steroids:** Use is linked to many negative effects such as acne, premature balding, anger problems, and increase in breast size in males.
- **Creatine:** There is no research to conclude if creatine is safe to use by people under 18 years old. Some athletes may experience weight gain/water retention, and have an increased risk of tearing tendons and ligaments. There is no “short cut” to building muscle.



Talk to a dietitian if you have questions about specific supplements.

What to Drink

Plain water is best for staying hydrated throughout the day.

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

- At least 4 hours before exercise, drink 250-500 ml of water
- 2 hours or less before exercise drink 125-375 ml water according to thirst
- Take sips of water every 15–20 minutes during your event or practice to replace fluid lost from sweat
- Keep drinking fluids after you’ve finished exercising

Sport Drinks

Sport Drinks are NOT recommended for:

- Exercise that is < 60 minutes steady duration (e.g. community hockey game);
- Sipping throughout the day or as a drink with meals.



Fluids to AVOID during exercise:

- Carbonated soft drinks, 100% fruit juice and fruit flavoured drinks, lemonade, energy drinks
- These fluids are high in sugar and can cause stomach cramps, which will decrease performance

For more information contact:

- Coaching Association of Canada: Sport nutrition resources: www.coach.ca/sport-nutrition-s14783
- Dietitian services at HealthLink BC: Call 8-1-1 to speak to a dietitian or go to www.healthlinkbc.ca/dietitian to email your question.
- Visit dietitians of Canada website at www.dietitians.ca to find a sports dietitian near you.