

SportsNutrition

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FOODS HIGHEST IN CARBOHYDRATES

For optimal health and sports performance, you should choose grain-based foods, vegetables, fruits and juices for both your daily training diet and for precompetition meals. Here are some suggestions.

Spaghetti, macaroni, noodles, and other plain pastas

Top pasta with tomato sauce to add more carbohydrates. Be cautious of casseroles, lasagnas and other pasta-entrees with lots of meat, cheese, or oil that contributes to "fat loading" rather than carbo-loading.

Rice

Steamed or boiled rice is preferable to chinese fried rice (saturated with oil and calories from fat). When possible, choose brown rice; it has more nutritional value than does white rice.

Potato, sweet potato, yams

Limit fatty french fries but enjoy potatoes that are baked, boiled or mashed (with minimal butter). Add moistness to a baked potato by mashing it with milk or topping it with lite sour cream.

Stuffing

A tasty, carbohydrate-rich change from pasta and potato. Store-bought stuffings are very quick and easy to prepare. Just add hot water and, if desired, some raisins and diced apples for extra carbs.

Couscous, millet, bulgar, kasha, barley

Wholesome alternatives to the standard dinner starches and a creative addition to casseroles and meals. Couscous cooks very quickly; the others take more time, so cook them in quantity for leftovers.

Dried beans (such as pinto, black, garbanzo), split peas, lentils

Chili beans, split pea soup, lentils, refried beans, baked beans, limas, and other beans are excellent sources of carbohydrates, protein and fiber. Caution: large portions may lead to digestive problems!

Bread, rolls, tortillas, wraps

Try to choose hearty, whole grain products made from whole wheat, oatmeal, rye, and corn to get more fiber and nutritional value than offered by refined, white flour products. Add butter sparingly, if at all, to breads so that you fill up on carbohydrates and not on butter (fat).

Pretzels, air-popped popcorn, lowfat crackers, baked chips

These lowfat munchies are preferable to greasy potato chips, tortilla chips, and crackers that leave you with greasy fingertips because they contain significant amounts of saturated (trans) fats. Look for lowfat snacks, including baked chips and baked or reduced-fat crackers.

When making popcorn, pop the kernels in minimal canola oil or use an air-popper. Commercially bagged popcorn or the microwave oven brands generally contain at least half of the calories from fat. Even the "lite" brands can be deceptively high in fat and relatively low in carbs.

Hot cereal

Add raisins, banana, dried fruit, brown sugar, or maple syrup for extra carbohydrates. Any hot cereal is a good choice, with oatmeal and oatbran being particularly heart-healthy. Whole grain cereals such as Wheatena and Maltex offer wholesome goodness; Cream of Wheat is an iron-rich choice. By mixing or alternating cereals (such as Wheatena with Cream of Wheat), you'll enhance your nutrient intake.

Cold cereal

Rather than eating puffed or flaked cereals, choose dense cereals such as Grape-Nuts, Wheat Chex or lowfat granolas. If constipation is a problem, choose brands with fiber or bran in the name (raisin bran, bran flakes). Add extra carbs by topping the cereal with bananas, raisins, and other fresh or dried fruits. Consider saving sugary cereals for snacks or dessert, rather than eating them for breakfast.

Bagels, lowfat muffins, corn bread, banana bread

For extra carbohydrates, spread these with jam or honey rather than butter, margarine, cream cheese.

Pancakes, waffles, french toast

Top these with additional carbohydrates such as maple syrup, blueberry sauce, fruit yogurt, honey, jam, or applesauce. Use butter or margarine sparingly, if at all.

Fruit

Dense fruits such as bananas, pineapple, raisins, dates, apricots, and other dried fruits offer more carbs than do watery fruits (such as grapes, plums, and peaches). Don't try to carbo-load on *too* much fruit; you may end up with diarrhea!

Juice

Apple, cranberry, cranraspberry, grape, pineapple, apricot nectar, and most juice blends offer more carbohydrates than do orange, grapefruit, and tomato juices. You can increase the carbohydrate content of frozen orange juice by simply diluting it with less water than the directions suggest. Fruit smoothies (made by mixing fruit and juice in the blender) are excellent, carbohydrate-rich drinks.

Desserts

Although many desserts such as cheesecake, ice cream, and rich cookies are made with lots of cream, butter, and shortening (and thereby have a high fat content), you can carbohydrate-load on lower fat (and more nutritious) alternatives such as apple crisp, blueberry cobbler, angel cake, date squares, fig bars, and oatmeal raisin cookies.

Frozen yogurt, lowfat ice cream, sherbert, sorbet, juice bars

These lowfat frozen desserts are preferable to rich and creamy choices. If you must have ice cream, choose the lower fat (less expensive) brands that have a higher percentage of calories from carbohydrates than do the high-priced gourmet brands.

Refined sugars and other carbohydrates with little nutritional value

Fueling-up on foods loaded with refined sugars is the equivalent of putting gas in a car but neglecting the spark plugs (that is, the vitamins and minerals). Although refined sugars do fuel the muscles, they lack nutritional value. If desired, eat the following sweets in moderation—and in addition to other wholesome foods:

- Jelly beans, licorice, gummy bears, marshmallows, and other low-fat sweets
- Honey, brown sugar, jam, jelly, maple syrup
- Carbonated soft drinks, lemonade, Kool-Aid, and other sweetened beverages
- Sports drinks (such as Gatorade, Ultra-Fuel or other sports drinks and recovery beverages)
- Commercial carbohydrate powders and formulas