

Nutrition Know-How for Physically Active Adults

Healthy eating is the key to getting more fun and fitness from your exercise program. Exercise makes your body work hard, and the right food helps your body respond. Food provides fuel (calories) and supplies body building materials (nutrients) to improve strength and aerobic fitness.

Feed the Machine

Physically active adults, getting 30 to 60 minutes of exercise most days of the week, can easily meet their body's demands for fuel and nutrients through a well chosen eating plan that's in step with their weight goals. Choose mostly nutrient-rich foods from the five food groups to get the carbohydrates, fiber, protein, fat, vitamins and minerals you need to be your best.

Energize

Carbohydrates from whole grains, vegetables and fruits are your body's favorite fuel because they turn into energy fast. They also supply vitamins and minerals that help your body get oxygen to cells and repair muscle and bone stressed by exercise. Depending on your calorie needs, aim for:

- **Fruits:** 2 to 2-1/2 cups daily. *Focus on fruits.*
- **Vegetables:** 2-1/2 to 3-1/2 cups daily. *Vary your veggies.*
- **Grain Foods:** 6 to 10 half-cup servings daily. *At least half your grains should be whole grains.*

Strengthen

Getting enough protein is vital for building or repairing muscle, replacing worn blood cells and boosting your immune system. MyPlate recommendations provide all the protein you need:

- **Lean Protein (Meat, Poultry, Fish, Beans, Eggs and Nuts):** 2-3 servings daily for a total of about 5 to 7 ounce-equivalents.
- **Fat-free or Lowfat Dairy:** 3 cups daily. Two ounces of process cheese or 1-1/2 ounces of natural cheese count as one cup of milk. One cup of calcium-fortified soy milk delivers protein and calcium.



**Fresh From the Garden
Tomato Pasta**

More on Protein!

Food sources of protein deliver important nutrients, including iron, zinc, potassium, magnesium and/or calcium. These nutrients are needed to turn protein into muscle and carbohydrate into energy, create red blood cells, send messages along nerves and contract muscles to get your body moving. So, there's no bonus to protein powder supplements for most people. Food sources of protein taste better, too!

A Little Goes a Long Way

A little fat with each meal helps your body absorb fat-soluble vitamins that help build your immune system and strengthen bones. Fat is also a concentrated energy source your body can use during extended exercise. But a little goes a long way. The equivalent of five to eight teaspoons a day will do it!

Focus on unsaturated oils from fish and plants, such as olive, canola or soybean oil, along with nuts and avocados because these fats are good for your heart. Eating too much saturated fat and *trans* fat can raise cholesterol and heart disease risk, so limit the amount you eat.

Cool It

You get fluids from food and beverages. Daily intake from water, fat-free milk, vegetables, fruits and 100% fruit juice and sports drinks carries heat away from your exercising muscles, cools them down and prevents heat injuries. Take along a water bottle when you exercise, especially on hot and humid days.

Fuel First

When your workout happens 3 or more hours after your last meal, start with a small snack (100-200 calories) that contains carbohydrates and is chosen from your daily food group totals. Yogurt, fruit, whole-grain crackers or a cereal bar are handy options. The energy boost will make your workout seem easier and more fun!

Special Needs of Adult Endurance Athletes

Athletes who work out vigorously (more than 60-90 minutes daily), such as marathoners or body builders, need extra fuel and

