

Carbohydrate is the body's main source of glucose, which is the body's favourite fuel. We store glucose in the form of glycogen. Therefore carbohydrate should form the basis of all healthy diets. There is no magic diet for runners, but the timing of meals is important for fuel before, during and after training.

There are two types of carbohydrates; starch which is digested to glucose, main sources of starchy carbohydrates are pasta, rice, potatoes & starchy vegetables, bread, breakfast cereals, and sugars. Sources of sugar carbohydrate include fruit, sports drinks, yoghurts, sports gels, cereal bars, sports bars, jelly beans, snakes and things like jam and honey.

Starchy carbohydrates should form the main part of your carbohydrate intake. This is to ensure that you get the nutrients and fibre that they contain, and that they keep you feeling satisfied.

It is important to be adequately fuelled before and after training so that you have adequate energy. If you run in the early morning, try to at least have some sports drink before training, or get up earlier and have a piece of toast or banana if you prefer. Ensure that after training you eat a carbohydrate rich meal (with some protein for muscle recovery) for breakfast such as:

- Wholegrain breakfast cereals with fruit and milk or yoghurt
- Wholegrain toast with jam or honey. (Include protein such as milk, yoghurt, or eggs, peanut butter etc).
- Baked beans or spaghetti on toast

If you run in the evening, have something like a sandwich for lunch, with meat, cheese or fish and salad, some fruit or low fat yoghurt and perhaps a snack a couple of hours before you run. (This could be some fruit, a sports drink, or a cereal bar. Experiment and see what you feel more comfortable with before training). After the run, be sure to include some carbohydrate rich foods such as potato, pasta, rice or bread in your evening meal. This will help to stock up your glycogen stores for the following day.

For more information on sports nutrition see the Australian Institute of Sport website <http://www.ausport.gov.au/ais/nutrition>