

NUTRITION AND HYDRATION GUIDE

Whether you're lacing up for the first time at the Vancouver Sun Run or are a seasoned runner looking to crush that old PB, eating the right foods prior to your race can greatly improve your performance and make for a better race experience overall.

This nutrition guide provides eating and hydration guidelines to think about and practice as you prepare for your upcoming race(s).



NUTRIENT REVIEW



CARBOHYDRATES (CARBS) are the most important nutrient for running, as they're our primary fuel source. Carb sources include pasta, potatoes, brown rice, and whole grain bread.



FATS are another important fuel source for lower intensity exercise and rest. Healthy fat sources include nuts/seeds, dairy products, oils and avocados.



PROTEINS are used for muscle building and repair. Protein sources include meat/fish, eggs, dairy products, soy products and beans/lentils.



ELECTROLYTES like sodium and potassium regulate our body's fluids and pH, and are lost when we sweat. We get these through food, but supplementation is recommended based on sweat levels, exercise intensity/ duration and temperatures.



WATER is also lost through sweat; making hydration before, during and after your runs a must.

PRE-RACE NUTRITION (24H BEFORE)

A 10km race does not require a formal carb-load (nutrition strategy to load your muscle carb stores before a race), however it's still important to focus on carb intake the day before your race:

- » Increase your carb intake by choosing higher carb meals/ snacks, including a lower-fibre, carb-rich dinner with some lean protein like pasta with tomato sauce and ground beef. Stay away from higher fat items like cream/cheese sauces or pizza, which take longer to digest.

You don't want to increase total calorie intake by too much, just the percentage of calories you are getting from carbs.

- » Drink lots of water and take a peek at your urine to make sure you are well-hydrated (it should be pale yellow or straw-coloured).
- » Keep exercise minimal the day before the race to keep your carb stores high, apart from walking or an easy 15 to 20-minute shakeout run (if that's part of your routine).

RACE-DAY NUTRITION

2-3HRS BEFORE THE RACE:

- » Have an easily digested, carb-rich meal with a little bit of fat and protein like peanut butter, banana & honey on toast or oatmeal made with milk & berries. Make sure you've tested your pre-race meal out before training runs, to avoid any digestive mishaps during your race.
- » Aim to sip on ~500ml of fluid the morning of the race, ideally water with an electrolyte mix in it!

WITHIN 30 MIN. OF THE RACE:

- » Have an extra 20-30g carbohydrate top-up for an extra boost of energy. Examples would be a banana, a sports gel or chews, or a full-sugar energy drink.

DURING THE RACE:

- » Most people will not need fuel during a 10km race, because the stored fuel (carbs) in our muscles will last us for 60-90 minutes of activity. However, if you will be running for longer than this, take a sports gel roughly 45 minutes into the race but make sure you've tried this in training runs.

- » Hydration needs will vary on individual sweat rates, speed and outdoor temperature - but generally, it is recommended to take water at hydration stations on the course so that you can maintain optimal hydration levels.

AFTER THE RACE:

Focus on these 3 R's: Refuel your gas tank with carbohydrates, Rehydrate losses from sweat with water and electrolytes, and Rebuild with protein to recover and repair. Have some fluids and a carb-rich snack within an hour of finishing, then have a proper meal 2-3 hours after finishing.

CAFFEINE AND PERFORMANCE:

Caffeine is used as a nutrition strategy that can improve running performance by reducing time to exhaustion and giving you an extra kick to run faster. Popular sources include energy drinks, with a 250 ml can providing 80 mg of caffeine, and coffee, with a small cup or single shot of espresso providing ~65-95 mg. Depending on your sensitivity to and experience with caffeine, you can safely have up to 200mg before your race, ideally within an hour, and up to 400mg from all sources in one day. However, it's important to note that more caffeine is not necessarily better when it comes to performance, and it's crucial to test out caffeine intake in training runs.



Red Bull
80 mg per 250 ml



Coffee
~65-95 mg