

## Wellness Articles

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## Fuelling young athletes

Nutrition is important for young athletes (ages 12 to 18) because it supports both healthy growth and sports performance. Young athletes who fuel their bodies with healthy choices will get more out of their training and perform better during competition.

Here are some tips for young athletes:

### Before your activity

Drink 1.5 – 2.5 cups of water two to three hours before activity to hydrate your body.

Plan to eat a meal two to three hours before an activity to give your body time to digest and convert it to fuel for your muscles. If you only have one to two hours before an activity, eat a smaller snack instead. Choose foods that contain carbohydrate and protein, as well as foods that are lower in fat and fibre. For example, try a fruit smoothie, a chicken wrap or an egg and toast.

### During an activity

Water is the best fluid to keep you hydrated when you are active for less than one hour. Bring a water bottle with you and drink every 15 to 20 minutes during activity. If you are active for more than one hour and sweating a lot, you may benefit from a sports drink. A sports drink provides carbohydrates (energy) and replaces the electrolytes you lose when you sweat. Avoid low carbohydrate sports drinks and drinks with caffeine or carbonation (fizz).

### After activity



After an activity, drink fluids and eat food to help you refuel and recover. Drink one to two cups of fluid and eat foods with carbohydrate and protein. Choose foods such as cereal and milk, fruit and Greek yogurt or a nut butter sandwich.