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Sports Nutrition During Your Workout

There's probably more research on what sports nutrition products to use during workouts than any other area. The critical factor is to maintain fluid balance while working out; water is an essential part of these products but that's not all.

The critical factor is to keep the brain, the nervous system, and the muscles all functioning during workouts; the longer the activity, the more important fluids become. We lose fluids readily as we work out. Part of that is our cooling mechanism, but another is a by-product of making energy using oxygen. Whether you burn carbohydrates or fat as the fuel, water and carbon dioxide are going to be released and exhaled even in cold weather. In other words, you're losing fluids whether you sweat or not.

The critical components of products such as sports drinks used during a workout is the fluid, of course, but also electrolytes such as sodium, potassium, calcium, and magnesium. If the nerves and muscles do not have the proper balance of electrolytes, the nerves can't send signals and the muscles won't contract.

Another important part of workout products is fuel, but that wouldn't apply to people who work out less than an hour. A well-fed person should have stores of sugar and fat to burn to last at least that long.



Especially in the summer during the heat and humidity, use these products to maintain fluid and electrolyte levels. The general rule is four ounces every 15 minutes while you're working out, extended for one to two hours after your workout. You can alternate between water and sports drinks, but pump those fluids! We'll look at post-workout products on Saturday.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

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