



Carbohydrates for performance

As the main fuel used by the body, carbohydrates need to be supplied at every meal and snack. Having good levels of carbohydrate in the body will ensure children have glucose to fuel their brains to learn and think, muscles to run and play, and heart and other vital organs to work well. Sometimes, these foods can be bulky, so need to be eaten in combination with foods that contain good levels of protein and some fat.

Carbohydrates can be found in many foods including:

- breads, breakfast cereals, flour, rice, pasta, oats;
- fruit, fruit juices, some vegetables (potato, sweet corn, sweet potato, beetroot);
- baked beans & other legumes;
- dairy products;
- sugar, lollies, sports drink and cordial.

Obviously, intake of sugar, lollies, and cordial, as well as sports drink and fruit juice need to be consumed in smaller amounts than the other foods, which are nutrient dense (in other words, also provide either fibre, protein, calcium, vitamins, or small amounts of fat).

Most children will meet their carbohydrate requirements if they have 5 – 11 serves of cereals and bread, 1 – 3 pieces of fruit, 2 – 3 vegetables, and 2 – 3 serves of milk, yoghurt, and cheese daily.

(One serve of cereals is equal to one of: 2 slices of bread, 1 cup cooked rice, pasta, or noodles, or 1 cup breakfast cereal flakes. One serve of fruit is equal to: one piece of medium sized fruit (eg. apple, orange), ½ cup fruit juice, ¼ cup dried fruit, 20 grapes or cherries, or 1 cup canned fruit. One serve of vegetables is equal to 1 cup salad vegetables, ½ cup cooked vegetables, or 1 medium potato. (Note that only potato, sweet potato and corn contain significant amounts of carbohydrate.))