eat right LIVE WELL

Eat To Compete

Recent studies focus on the benefits of whole grains in lowering risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and other chronic conditions. But what types of carbohydrates should you choose for workouts and for keeping your energy high throughout the day?

Incorporating grains into a healthy lifestyle

Carbohydrates act as the primary fuel for your brain and muscles. Remember those pasta nights before the big game? The reason for the "carb load" was to increase your glycogen, or your stored carbohydrates, to be available as energy while you exercise. Fast-acting energy sources, such as refined grains, can provide quick energy before, during and after a game or workout. But what about energy over the course of the day, while you are at work or taking care of the kids? Throughout the day, active men and women should consume 6-8 ounces or servings of grains.

What kind of grains should I look for?

According to the Dietary Guidelines, at least half of your grains should be whole grains. Whole grains contain the entire kernel and provide dietary fiber, iron, B vitamins and phytochemicals. When shopping, look for whole grains as the first ingredient on the package. When eating out, look for menu items with whole grain pasta, brown rice, quinoa, oatmeal, whole wheat wraps, tortillas and other whole grains.

Bottom Line:

The health benefits of whole grains are more pronounced within the context of a healthy lifestyle. If you lead an active lifestyle, consider limiting refined grains to periods before, during or after a workout. The rest of your servings of carbohydrates should be focused on complex, whole grains.

REFERENCES:

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