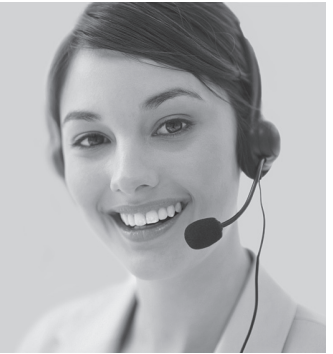


“It was great to talk with you.

Thank you for your interest in ‘What to Eat and Drink for Exercise.’
I hope you find this tip sheet helpful.

Please give me a call if you have more questions about this or other topics.

As your UPMC Health Plan health coach, I’m ready to help in any way I can.”



Do you walk for fitness? Train for marathons? For all types of exercise, staying hydrated and eating right will help you perform better. You’ll have more energy and feel better too.

Follow the tips below. Keep in mind:

- **Watch calories!** Walking or running a mile burns only about 100 calories. Beware! Don’t overeat all day as a reward for working out. Avoid high-calorie sports drinks and energy bars for short workouts.
- **Sports foods aren’t better than “real” food.** Examples of sports foods are energy bars, gels, and shakes. They may be easier to use for certain workouts. But real food is just as effective. It also costs less and often tastes better.

What to Drink

During all types of exercise, you lose body fluid through sweat and breathing. By replacing lost fluid you will perform better, feel better, and stay hydrated. You will also help prevent cramps and heat illness. Heat illness may be minor as in a rash or swelling. Or it may be deadly as in heat stroke.

The amount of fluid loss varies. You’ll lose more fluid if:

- You sweat a lot.
- It is very hot or humid.
- It is very sunny.
- You are overdressed or wearing too many layers.
- It is very cold. In the cold, you lose more fluids through breathing.
- You are at a high altitude.
- You do a long, hard workout.



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To get an idea of your own fluid needs:

- **Check the amount and color of your urine.** Dark colored, smaller amounts mean you need to drink more.
- **Weigh yourself right before and after a typical workout.** Any weight you lose is likely from fluid loss. Do this a few times to get a sense of your own fluid needs.

The amounts below are starting points:

- **Before you work out:** Drink 16 to 20 fluid ounces (2 to 2½ cups) at least four hours before. Drink another 8 to 12 fluid ounces (1 to 1½ cups) 10 to 15 minutes before.
- **While you work out:** Drink 3 to 8 fluid ounces (½ to 1 cup) every 15 to 20 minutes. Do not drink more than 32 fluid ounces (4 cups) per hour. Excessive amounts can lower the sodium in your blood. This can cause serious medical problems and risk of death.
- **After you work out:** Drink 20 to 24 fluid ounces (2 to 3 cups) for every pound of weight you lose.

If you are an endurance athlete, talk with your UPMC Health Plan health coach or a trainer about your specific fluid needs.

Should you drink water or a sports drink?

- Drink **water** for workouts that last less than 60 minutes.
- Drink a **sports drink (5-8% carbohydrate) with electrolytes** for longer workouts. Choose a flavor you like.

Note: Electrolytes, such as sodium and potassium, are lost in sweat. This can be of concern during long, hard workouts.

What to Eat

When you exercise, your body needs:

- Carbs for energy
- Protein to repair and build muscles
- Carbs and protein to replenish glycogen (a carb, stored in your muscles and liver, that is used for energy during long workouts.)



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UPMC HEALTH PLAN

For workouts that last less than 60 minutes, a healthy diet is enough.

- Eat fruits, vegetables, and grain foods every day. They are rich in carbs. Make at least half your grains whole. Avoid sugary foods and drinks with added sugar. Limit fruit juice to ½ cup or less per day. It is high in natural sugar.
- Eat 5-6 ounces of lean protein foods per day.
- Eat 2-3 servings of nonfat dairy foods per day. They are rich in carbs and protein.
- Want an energy boost before a short workout? Eat a few crackers, a piece of fruit, or a cup of nonfat milk. Choose this snack from (not in addition to) your regular eating plan.

For workouts that last 60 minutes or longer:

- An hour before you work out: Eat 200-300 calories that are rich in carbs. This will fuel the first hour. Examples:
 - A 4-ounce bagel
 - 2 servings of fresh fruit (or ½ cup dried fruit such as raisins)
 - A low-fat energy bar with about 25-40 grams of carb and less than 15 grams of protein (Fat and protein slow digestion.)
- Limit fiber in this snack because it can cause stomach discomfort.
- **After the first hour of exercise:** Eat 100-300 carb-rich calories per hour. See examples above. Do you do exercise that jostles your stomach, like running? You may prefer a sports drink or carb gels. Most carb gel packs contain 100 calories. Choose a flavor you like.
- **About 30 minutes after you work out:** Eat a healthy snack or meal. Include carbs and a moderate amount of protein. Large amounts of protein slow digestion. Aim for roughly three times as much carbohydrate as protein. Examples:
 - Low-fat (1%) chocolate milk
 - A fruit smoothie or low-fat yogurt with fruit
 - A sandwich
 - Pasta with a moderate amount of lean meat sauce
 - Cereal and nonfat or low-fat (1%) milk with fruit
 - A commercial recovery drink

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What to Eat and Drink for Exercise

To avoid overeating, time your workout before a meal.

If you are an endurance athlete, talk with a trainer about your specific food and fluid needs.

Take Action

Make a plan below for what to eat and drink for exercise. Have it on hand before you begin your workout. *Be specific.*



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