

Myths and Hype Surrounding Sports Nutrition

Athletes are always looking for the cutting edge. So many are looking for magic bullet, but base nutrition doesn't change for athletes. They just need more of it. When base nutrition is not in place, it doesn't matter what supplements you take, you will not get the results you are looking for.

The effects of exercise increase the needs for specific nutrients. Exercise stresses joints and tendons and creates tremendous short term damage at the cellular level. Free radical production and damage is much greater than with non-athletes. The body can recover and fix the damage, but it depends on nutrition to help that. There is a lot of solid science that chronic exercise and over training suppresses the immune system and that is why athletes get sick often.

The key to success is recovery. The simple equation Stress (Exercise) + Rest (Recovery) = Improvement. Specific nutrients are critical in the body's ability to recovery and improve from the stress of training. Often athletes attempt to improve their performance by over training, but neglect to allow their bodies to recover. The result is sickness which disrupts their training schedule and sets them back in their goals.

In order to be healthy, we require whole grains, fruits, vegetables and omega III fatty acids from fish and plant sources. This is the foundation to any nutritional program. Unfortunately athlete's diets due to travel, lifestyle and convenience do not give them all the critical nutrients they need. Whole food supplements can help to fill this gap in the athlete's diets.

There is a lot of hype in the marketplace today and according to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), 71% of so-called sports nutrition products aren't as nutritious as they advertise to be. In fact, 165 products were tested and the CFIA found fault with 117 of them. So what is an athlete to do?

I recommend asking the following questions:

1. What is the product made from? I.e., is it made from whole foods and not just "natural" sources such as petroleum, tree bark, pond scum or oyster shells? Are the products guaranteed to be safe and legal for all athletes to use?
2. Does the Company have a Scientific Advisory Board or just a good looking doctor who endorses the products? Are these scientists involved in research and development of the products? Does the company have their own labs and manufacturing facilities?
3. Is the Company involved with organizations around the world such as the World Health Organization, the New York Academy of Sciences, and Centre for Disease Control, etc.?
4. Do they have independent studies published on their products in peer reviewed scientific journals such as The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition? Are there any clinical studies done on humans on what the products do at the cellular level?
5. Do the products work? Are there credible statistics available written in layman's terms to judge their effectiveness?

👉 Sports injuries treated with essential fatty acids and antioxidants are an effective treatment for inflammatory injuries common to many athletes*

¹Researchers working with Denmark's National Rowing Team gave athletes a combination of nutritional supplements to treat overuse injuries. Instead of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS), which can have unwanted side effects, the athletes were given a combination of Omega 3 and Omega 6 oils, vitamins A, B6, C and E, plus selenium and zinc. According to researchers, most athletes responded positively to the treatment in as little as 2-3 weeks. This exciting research also supports the important role supplements play in the prevention of overuse injuries.

👉 Protein within minutes after exercise boost muscle*

²When it comes to protein intake, minutes can make the difference. A Danish study demonstrated that men who drank a high quality protein supplements 2 hours after a weight training session had no increase in muscle mass after the 12-week program. In contrast men who drank their protein supplement within minutes of the training session had an increase in thigh muscle mass. A complete protein meal or supplement (that contains 22 of the amino acids) is best consumed within 30 minutes after exercising for best results.

Nutrition and whole supplements definitely can improve an athlete's recovery, support immune capacity and improve performance. Don't be fooled in thinking that training is the only link to success. A strong foundation of nutrition does make the difference.

¹Rueters Health April 27, 2000; ²Rueters News Service

Be well,
Maryellen Vandenbrink, RNCP



Maryellen Vandenbrink is a Registered Holistic Nutritionist and has been in the business of helping clients feel better and have more energy since 1993.

For more information:
Telephone: 905-824-2115
Email: hmlifestyles@rogers.com
Web site: www.behealthywithgnld.ca