



Reading Food Labels

Serving sizes are standardized for foods. Pay attention to how many there are in a food product.

Saturated and trans fats increase inflammation and slow recovery.

Sodium is essential for optimal hydration before, during and after training.

Complex carbohydrates and dietary fiber can stabilize blood sugar, prevent insulin spikes and keep body weight under control.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size	8 fl oz (236mL)
Servings Per Container:	1
Amount per serving	
Calories	170
Calories from Fat	25
% Daily Value	
Total Fat	3g 5%
Saturated Fat	1.5g 8%
Trans Fat	0g
Cholesterol	5mg 2%
Sodium	150mg 6%
Total Carbohydrate	26g 9%
Dietary Fiber	0g 0%
Sugars	25g
Protein	9g 14%
Vitamin A	10%
Vitamin C	6%
Calcium	30%
Iron	0%

% Daily Value does not pertain to elite athletes.

Too much cholesterol can contribute to high blood cholesterol levels and be detrimental to health and performance.

Lean protein is necessary for muscle recovery after hard training sessions.

Vitamin and mineral dense foods are important during high intensity training.

Example

Nutrition Facts SKIM MILK	
Serving Size	1 cup (247g)
Servings Per Container:	1
Amount per serving	
Calories	83
Calories from Fat	2
% Daily Value	
Total Fat	0g 0%
Saturated Fat	0g 1%
Trans Fat	0g
Cholesterol	5mg 2%
Sodium	103mg 4%
Total Carbohydrate	12g 4%
Dietary Fiber	0g
Sugars	12g
Protein	8g
Vitamin A	10%
Vitamin C	4%
Calcium	30%
Iron	1%

VS

Nutrition Facts 2% MILK	
Serving Size	1 cup (247g)
Servings Per Container:	1
Amount per serving	
Calories	122
Calories from Fat	43
% Daily Value	
Total Fat	5g 7%
Saturated Fat	3g 15%
Trans Fat	0g
Cholesterol	20mg 7%
Sodium	100mg 4%
Total Carbohydrate	11g 4%
Dietary Fiber	0g
Sugars	12g
Protein	8g
Vitamin A	9%
Vitamin C	1%
Calcium	29%
Iron	0%

More calories

Higher fat and cholesterol

Same protein and calcium



Performance

Eating a diet high in saturated or trans fats will promote inflammation which is detrimental to recovery. These types of fat are found in higher fat dairy products, meats, fried foods and processed foods/snacks.

Sodium promotes better hydration before, during and after training or competition. Endurance athletes may require more sodium than non-endurance athletes but remember that too much sodium can have a negative impact on health and could contribute to high blood pressure in athletes who are salt-sensitive.

Eating protein during the day will help replenish stores that are lost during higher intensity or longer duration training. In addition, eating protein with carbohydrate immediately following workouts will help speed recovery. Choose sources such as lean meats, dairy products and soy products.

Vitamins and minerals are always important for elite athletes but even more so during higher volume and intensity training times of the year. Foods that are rich in vitamins and minerals also contain antioxidants which are important for elite athletes. Antioxidant rich foods such as fruits and vegetables will keep the immune system in top shape for performance.

Weight Management

Eating complex carbohydrates and at least 25 grams of fiber each day will help stabilize insulin levels and help maintain a good performance body composition. Be sure to eat frequently throughout the day and focus on fiber-rich foods such as whole grains and fruits and vegetables.

% Daily Value is based on 2000 or 2500 calorie meal plans and is not applicable to elite athletes. Calories consumed should vary based on weight and body composition goals and training cycle.

For athletes wanting to reduce body fat, it is important to eat more frequently throughout the day. Eating every 3-4 hours and focusing on lean protein, fruits and vegetables and whole grains will help improve body composition.

This material was developed by professional sports nutritionists at the United States Olympic Committee. For more information and additional sport performance resources, visit: