

FITNESS BEAT



Issue 2: FOCUS ON SUPPLEMENTS & CALORIES

Creatine: Should You or Shouldn't You?

Creatine has been promoted heavily in the past few years as a nutritional supplement because it was thought to enhance athletic performance. The enthusiasm over creatine grew because it is a natural part of many foods, it is not a banned substance, and it doesn't appear to have any harmful short-term side effects.

Lab tests have shown conflicting results about whether or not it actually improves exercise performance. What is known is that too much creatine excretion (or elimination) does put extra stress on the kidneys. Since the majority

of studies have been conducted with college-age and adult subjects, the effect on teens is unknown. The long-term effect of using creatine as a supplement is also unknown.

Researchers and medical experts discourage the use of creatine by both teens and adults. More research is needed to determine creatine's risks and benefits.

Source: "Creatine: To Supplement or Not to Supplement," Nutrition: Research, Practice & Application, OSU Dept of Human Nutrition & Food Management, Vol.2, Issue 3 Summer-Fall, 1998.

Where are the Calories in Food?

NUTRIENT	CALORIES PER GRAM
Protein	4
Carbohydrates	4
Fat	9

Do You Need to Take Supplements?

Not if you are eating a balanced diet. Studies show that people who use supplements do so without knowing their real needs. It's much safer to get your vitamins from foods than from supplements.

If you are a very active athlete (eating more than 3000 calories per day), it's very unlikely that you need supplements.

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Water vs. Sports Drinks

Choosing water over other beverages is always a good bet. It's refreshing, it's calorie-free, it's absorbed quickly and it works just fine for people who exercise moderately or for recreation.

But for more serious athletes — those training for marathons or other intense events that will keep them going for more than 1.5 to 2 hours — drinking a beverage that contains a small amount of sugar while they're exercising is probably a good idea. If that beverage contains the electrolytes sodium and potassium, as sports drinks do, so much the better. They help replenish body fluids quickly.

Experts say it's important to get enough fluids before, during and after exercise. Fluid in blood transports nutrients to working muscles and carries away the wastes. And fluid in sweat helps to cool the body.

You should stay away from beverages that contain caffeine — they have a dehydrating effect on the body. That is, they take water out of the body, when what you're trying to do is **replace** the water.

Adapted from: *Chow Line* by Martha Filipic.

Vitamin Overdose



Vitamins and minerals do not supply energy, but they are needed for the growth, maintenance and function of all body tissues. A balanced diet can provide all of these necessary vitamins and minerals.

However, many people still take vitamin and mineral supplements. Because an excess of some vitamins cannot be eliminated by the body, they accumulate in the body and can become toxic (especially Vitamins A and D). Some vitamins are a waste of money, since they are eliminated in the urine when the body has all that it needs (Vitamin C and the B complex vitamins).

Increase Your Calories

Some teens are growing so rapidly or are so active that they find it hard to gain weight. If you want to put on some extra pounds, here's how to do it:

- ☺ **Eat foods from the Food Guide Pyramid first!** Snacking between meals is a good way to increase your food intake. However, it is important to eat healthy snacks rather than pigging-out on chips or candy. These foods have calories and are nutritious:
 - ice cream
 - milkshakes, floats
 - nuts
 - milk or yogurt
 - pudding
 - cottage cheese and cheese
 - crackers or bread with peanut butter & jelly
 - sandwiches with lean meat
 - dried or fresh fruits
- ☺ **Eat bigger portions.** If you find it difficult to eat larger portions...
 - 🍷 add raisins & dried fruit to cereals
 - 🍷 add powdered milk or instant breakfast mixes to milk
 - 🍷 sprinkle crumbled hard-cooked eggs or grated cheese over salads, soups or casseroles
 - 🍷 add whipped cream to hot chocolate
 - 🍷 add fruit to plain gelatin salads or desserts
 - 🍷 use butter, margarine or mayonnaise on sandwiches