

Healthy nutrition & hydration

The right nutrition and hydration are essential to train for and successfully complete a 5K. The tips below can help you figure out what will work for you.

Note: There is no one-size-fits-all regimen. Experiment through trial and error to see what works best for your body.

Nutrition

- Before a walk or run training session, you may need to eat a small carbohydrate snack, like toast, half an English muffin, a banana, a few crackers or a small granola bar. These foods are quickly digested and ready for your body to burn as energy.
- If your training session is less than hour, you may not need to eat a snack at all.
- If you are exercising for longer than an hour, be sure to eat well the day before. Then, choose a pre-exercise snack with protein and carbohydrates, such as an apple with string cheese or a Greek yogurt. Limit high-fat sources of protein, such as hamburgers, fried food and cheese omelets — they take longer to empty from the stomach.
- Allow adequate time for digestion before running. Recommended timeframes include:
 - 3–4 hours if you have eaten a large or heavy meal
 - 2–3 hours for a small or light meal
 - 1–2 hours for a blended or liquid meal
 - Less than 1 hour for a snack
- If you know that you will not be able to eat before you run, make sure to eat well the night before.
- After a weight-lifting or intensive training session, eat as soon as tolerated. Muscles break down during these types of workouts and should be repaired with food. Eating within 30–45 minutes after exercise is the ideal timeframe to nourish, repair and rebuild muscles. Choose a carbohydrate and a protein food, to help repair muscle and prevent soreness.
- If you are not hungry after training, opt for a small healthy snack, like a protein drink, fresh or dried fruit, cereal or a granola bar for recovery.

Hydration

- More than 70% of your body is water, so it is important to hydrate when exercising.
- Try to drink on a schedule. Shoot for 4–6 ounces of water for every 15 minutes you are training. If you're thirsty, you may already be underhydrated.
- To see how much water you lose through sweat and breathing during exercise, weigh yourself before and after activity. For every pound lost, rehydrate with 2–3 cups of water.
- Check the color of your urine to assess your hydration. If your urine is lighter, has a large volume and little to no odor, then you are well hydrated. If it is dark yellow and has small volume and a strong odor, then you may be underhydrated and at risk for dehydration.
- Be sure to keep up with hydration between your training episodes. Starting an endurance event well hydrated can help prevent dehydration!

Hydration tips

- During your training walks or runs, carry a bottle of water with you.
- During a race, drink water at each water station. If you cannot drink the whole cup, make sure to drink at least five sips.

What to drink

- Water is the best option. Choose plain, unflavored water or sparkling seltzer.
- If you need flavor, 100% fruit juice can also rehydrate the body. Dilute with water, ice or sparkling water to reduce excess consumption of sugar, carbohydrates and calories.
- A great post-training drink is non-fat, low-fat milk or soy milk to repair muscles.

Sports drinks information

- If you are exercising for less than an hour, it is recommended that you drink water only and avoid sports drinks.
- It is recommended that triathletes and marathon runners use sports drinks for extended and intensive training sessions.
- Sports drinks contain added sodium and potassium to replace what your body loses during profuse sweating.
- Most sports drinks also contain sugar, carbohydrates and calories you may or may not need during training.

Important to note

- There may be some exceptions to this guidance based on your personal health needs.
- Consider consulting with a Registered Dietitian - Nutritionist if you want tailored guidance as you prepare for this event.
- QuadMed Dietitians are available to employees enrolled in a Quad medical plan at no cost. Schedule through MyChart or by calling 1-888-417-1001.

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Questions? Contact
quadwellness@quadmedical.com