

POTATOES AND ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE

FACT CHECK



Q: Are potatoes beneficial in the diet of an athlete?

A: Yes. One medium (5.2 ounce) skin-on potato provides 26 grams of carbohydrate, 620 milligrams of potassium, and 110 calories for energy - key nutrients in the diets of athletes and active individuals.

FACTS

- Potatoes are nutrient-dense complex carbs. A medium (5.2 ounce) skin-on potato contains 26 grams of carbohydrates.¹
 - Carbohydrate is the primary fuel for your brain and a key source of energy for muscles.
 - Carbohydrate is important for optimal physical and mental performance.²
 - Because your body's own stores of carbohydrate are limited and may be depleted – even in a single session of intense and/or prolonged exercise – it's important to replenish them.²
- Potatoes have even more potassium than a medium-size banana.³ A medium (5.2 ounce) skin-on potato contains 620 milligrams of potassium.
 - Potassium is an important electrolyte that aids in muscle, cardiovascular and nervous system function.
 - The 2015 Dietary Guidelines mention potassium as an under-consumed nutrient of concern, and recommends consuming foods with the highest level of potassium such as white potatoes.⁴
- Potatoes are more energy-packed than any other popular vegetable.³ A medium (5.2 ounce) skin-on potato contains 110 calories.
 - Adequate energy intake supports optimal body functions.
 - It's critical to take in the appropriate number of calories to match the demands of your day.

REFERENCES

1. Nutrition and Athletic Performance. Position of the Academy for Nutrition and Dietetics, American College of Sports Medicine and the Dieticians of Canada. *Med Sci Sports Exerc.* 2015; 48:543-568.
2. Burke LM, Hawley JA, Wong SH, Jeukendrup AE. Carbohydrates for training and competition. *J Sports Sci.* 2011; 29(Suppl 1): S17-27.
3. US Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Nutrient Data Laboratory. USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 28 (Slightly revised). Version Current: May 2016.
4. Internet: <http://www.ars.usda.gov/ba/bhnrc/ndl>
5. Potassium: Food Sources Ranked by Amounts of Potassium and Energy per Standard Food Portions and per 100 Grams of Foods. Available at: <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/appendix-10/>.