

Eat Your Water

Hydrating foods provide plenty of fluid and healthy nutrients to fuel hot summer runs.

By Leslie Goldman

Here's some juicy news: Drinking water isn't the only way to **stay hydrated**. According to the Institute of Medicine, 20 percent of your water intake comes from food. "Eating a three-ounce cucumber is like drinking three ounces of water, but better," says Howard Murad, M.D., author of *The Water Secret*. Besides being water-rich, vegetables, fruits, and a few other key foods contain nutrients that can boost a runner's performance and health. In addition to filling your water bottle, add these foods to your diet for hydration, nutrients, and a tasty change of pace.

H2O+ ELECTROLYTES

CANTALOUPE, PEACHES, STRAWBERRIES

These fruits are mostly water and rich in potassium, an electrolyte lost through sweat. "Potassium and sodium work together to maintain fluid levels in the body," says Wendy Bazilian, Dr.PH., R.D., author of *The SuperFoodsRx Diet*, "which helps regulate your heartbeat and circulation." One cup of each contains between five and 10 percent of your daily needs.

WET YOUR APPETITE

Toss strawberries into guacamole. Or make a cool soup: Blend together peaches, cantaloupe, peach nectar, lime juice, and sea salt, says culinary nutritionist Jackie Newgent, R.D.

H2O + VITAMIN C

WATERMELON, KIWI, CITRUS

Vitamin C helps maintain cartilage and joint flexibility, and these fruits provide at least a third of your daily need per serving. It also plays a role in protecting your skin. "UV rays, pollution, and sweat negatively affect your skin," Bazilian says, and vitamin C counters those effects. A study in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* found watermelon and kiwi are nearly as healthy six days after being cut, so make fruit salad for the whole week.

WET YOUR APPETITE

Stir-fry tofu, bok choy, and scallion; add grapefruit segments. Combine kiwi with greens, avocado, pistachios, and onion. Toss watermelon with feta and mint.

H2O + CANCER DEFENSE

TOMATOES, BROCCOLI

Tomatoes are rich in lycopene; studies link this antioxidant to a reduced risk of lung, stomach, prostate, breast, colon, and cervical cancer. While it may not seem juicy, broccoli is 90 percent water and contains compounds called isothiocyanates. A 2010 study in the *Journal of Medicinal Chemistry* found isothiocyanates block a defective gene that causes cells to become cancerous.

WET YOUR APPETITE

Skewer cherry tomatoes and grill until lightly charred; add mozzarella balls, balsamic vinegar, and fresh basil. Stir-fry broccoli with grated ginger; add minced grapes and sunflower seeds.

H2O + RECOVERY

PINEAPPLE, CHERRIES

Both fruits may help you recover and rehydrate post-run. Studies show the enzyme bromelain, found in pineapple, may reduce inflammation and speed muscle repair. "Tart cherries contain anthocyanins and

melatonin, which reduce inflammation," says Russel J. Reiter, Ph.D., professor of cellular and structural biology at the University of Texas Health Science Center.

WET YOUR APPETITE

Skewer pineapple with chicken and bell peppers; brush with teriyaki sauce and grill. Stir minced cherries into dijon mustard.

H2O + IMMUNITY

YOGURT, KEFIR

Studies show that eating probiotic-rich foods can protect you from catching respiratory-tract infections that might otherwise thwart your run. Yogurt usually delivers between one and five strains of probiotics (healthy bacteria); kefir, a yogurtlike drink, can contain up to a dozen. One cup of each also contains 10 to 12 grams of protein, an immune-system building block.

WET YOUR APPETITE

Mix together hummus and yogurt; add lemon juice. Whisk together equal parts maple syrup and kefir for a pancake topping.

H2O + DIGESTION

BEANS

One cup of cooked beans (like kidney, pinto, and garbanzo) provides a half cup of water, as much protein as two eggs, and half your daily fiber needs. Fiber keeps your digestive system moving, helps lower cholesterol, and controls appetite. "Beans are the perfect runner's food," says Bazilian. "They're a balanced combo of carbs and protein, which allows for a slower release of blood sugar for optimal performance."

WET YOUR APPETITE

Combine beans, celery, onion, olive oil, and red-wine vinegar; add herbs and salt.

Drink Up

Beverages with benefits

CHOCOLATE MILK

Its ideal ratio of protein and carbs helps speed postrun recovery.

COCONUT WATER

The liquid found in green coconuts has fewer calories and more electrolytes than sports drinks.

CONCORD GRAPE JUICE

Research shows it has more antioxidants than other common juices.

ICED GREEN TEA

Compounds called EGCG give it anti-inflammatory properties.

EAT Better: Stick to plain yogurt (which is water-and protein-rich), since sweetened varieties can contain four or more teaspoons of sugar per serving.