



## **NUTRITION**

### **Information for Dancers**

To dance well you need to eat well. The food you eat and the way you eat can have a major impact on your health, wellbeing and dance performance. As a dancer you need sufficient energy to meet the demands of training and performance. The right amounts of food and fluids will provide the body with the fuel necessary to achieve optimal training benefits and peak performance. As a dancer you make far more demands on your body than the average person and therefore need to be more careful about how you look after it.

A dancer's diet should be composed of about 55-60% carbohydrate, 15-20% protein and 15-20% fat. During heavy training and rehearsals the amount of carbohydrate should be increased to about 65%.

Good carbohydrate foods are things like cereal, bread and pasta. These are complex carbohydrates - nutrient dense, providing sustained energy release. They should be consumed in preference to simple carbohydrates such as sweets, honey and sugar that are nutrient poor and provide short term energy release. Protein foods are things like chicken, fish, red meat, tofu, chickpeas and nuts. Fats are in oils, butter, cheese, chips and biscuits. Try to make the amount of saturated fats in your diet less than 10%.

Adequate hydration (fluid) is also very important. Fluid loss during class, rehearsal and performance can result in dehydration that can impair performance and mental ability. Water is the best fluid to drink for dance activity that lasts less than an hour. How much you need to drink will vary from dancer to dancer and will depend on a number of factors e.g. the intensity of the activity and your body weight. For dance activity lasting longer than 60 minutes, sports drinks can replace fluid, carbohydrate and sodium losses. Caffeinated drinks such as tea, coffee, coke and energy drinks are a poor choice for fluid replacement during dance activity as they have a diuretic effect (enhance urine formation) which can contribute to dehydration.

There is much conflicting advice about what type of diet is best. For more specific and individual information you should consult a registered dietician.

### **Websites - For further information**

[www.iadms.org](http://www.iadms.org) - Nutritional Fact Sheet: Fuelling the Dancer

[www.sparc.org.nz/high-performance/resources-tools](http://www.sparc.org.nz/high-performance/resources-tools) - Handouts including *Fluid and Temperature* and *Nutrition and Recovery*

[www.physsportsmed.com/personal](http://www.physsportsmed.com/personal) - Caffeine: A User's Guide

[www.prixdelausanne.org](http://www.prixdelausanne.org) - The Supporting Seminars from the 2003 Prix de Lausanne.

[www.moh.govt.nz](http://www.moh.govt.nz) Healthy Eating- Healthy Action

