

Exercise: All Things Watermelon

Elizabeth Somer, M.A.,R.D.

May 17, 2013

- Exercise can increase inflammation in the body, which is an underlying risk factor for disorders. Diet is a major player in reducing inflammation. For example, fruits like watermelon are rich in the antioxidants vitamin C, lycopene, and beta carotene, which help protect tissues from damage associated with inflammation. The more anti-inflammatory foods you eat, the lower your risk.
- Exercise generates little oxygen fragments, called free radicals or oxidants, that can contribute to tissue damage and prolonged recovery from exercise. Antioxidant vitamins in watermelon, such as vitamin C, as well as the phytonutrients lycopene and beta carotene help slow, stop, and even reverse this damage.
- Intense exercise is associated with an increased risk for colds and infections post-activity, but boosting intake of vitamin C-rich foods, such as watermelon, can help avoid this risk.
- Most people who exercise know that electrolytes, such as potassium, are important during activity to replace losses in sweat, as well as maintain fluid balance, heart rate, and blood pressure. Watermelon is a good source of potassium.
- Replacing fluids before, during, and following exercise is must. Besides the water bottle, you can get your fluids from foods, such as watermelon, which is 92% water. There is well over 1 ½ cups of water in 2 cups of watermelon!
- Maintaining healthy blood flow is important anytime, but especially during exercise. Watermelon supplies two important compounds, citrulline and arginine, that help keep blood flowing freely and efficiently.