

# Fit for Life

## Hydration & Fuelling Tips

Stay energised, fuelled, and hydrated before, during, and after your McCabes Pharmacy Fit for Life Programme by Registered Dietitian Evan Lynch.

### When to Eat Before a Run

#### **3–4 Hours Before (ideal for long/hard runs):**

- Aim for a balanced meal that prioritises starchy carbohydrates and lean protein, with low fat and low fibre.

*Examples:*

- Porridge with banana
- Pasta with chicken and a small amount of sauce
- White rice with lean mince or eggs
- Avoid high-fibre and high-fat ingredients like nuts, seeds, or large servings of vegetables in this meal.
- This meal is primarily about fuelling your session, not ticking off your five-a-day. In this context, we want to maximise carbohydrate availability, support nutrient absorption, and minimise GI upset.

□ Compartmentalise your day:

Use your pre-exercise meals for performance nutrition (fuel + digestibility), and the rest of your day for general healthy eating, including fruit, vegetables, and healthy fats. This strategy keeps your gut happy and your training quality high.

#### **1–2 Hours Before (shorter/moderate runs):**

- Light, fast-digesting carbs work best.

*Examples:*

- Toast with jam
- Banana
- Low-fat yogurt with honey
- Keep it small and simple to avoid bloating or discomfort.

#### **30–60 Minutes Before (quick energy boost):**

- Opt for high GI carbs only. Best for short/easy runs—test in training first!

*Examples:*

- Energy gel
- Sports drink
- Ripe banana or dates
- Ideal for short/easy runs or a top-up for longer sessions—trial in training first.

## Runner–Friendly Foods

### Pre–Workout Focus (60 mins before):

- High GI carbs to boost performance and energy.
- Lean protein optional.

*Examples:*

- Jam sandwich
- Cereal with low-fat milk
- White toast + honey

### During Training (for sessions >60 mins):

- Quick-access carbs to maintain energy.

*Examples:*

- Ripe banana
- Dried fruit
- Isotonic sports drinks

### Post–Workout Refuelling:

- Prioritise high GI carbs ASAP to support glycogen recovery.
- Protein timing is secondary—focus on spreading 4–5 protein-rich meals/snacks across your day for muscle repair.

*Catch-all example:*

- Chocolate milk (fast carbs + quality protein).

## Hydration & Fluid Strategy

### Daily Needs:

- <65 years: Aim for 35 ml/kg/day
- >65 years: Aim for 30 ml/kg/day  
(e.g., a 70 kg person under 65 should aim for ~2.45 L/day)

### Before a Run:

- Drink 500 ml (1–2 glasses) 1–2 hours before.

### During a Run:

- Sweat losses average >1 L/hour, with a range of 400–2000 ml/hr.
- Replace fluids by sipping 150–200 ml every 20 minutes.
- Isotonic drinks are preferred in hot/humid conditions or longer sessions for better hydration and electrolyte balance.
- For most easy runs in Irish weather, plain water is usually sufficient.

### After a Run:

- Rehydrate fully. Use urine colour as a guide—pale yellow = well hydrated.

## Quick Tips for Runners

- Avoid high-fat, high-fibre meals before training.
- Fuel with high GI carbs ~60 mins pre-run, and again ASAP post-run.
- Use the 15–30 min recovery window for best refuelling results (e.g., chocolate milk + banana).
- Spread 4–5 protein-rich meals evenly throughout your day—timing is not critical.
- Include omega-3-rich oily fish like salmon or sardines twice per week to support recovery and reduce inflammation.

