

# 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.<sup>1</sup>
  - 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.<sup>2</sup>
  - 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.<sup>2</sup>
- Potatoes have even more potassium than a medium-size banana.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>
- Potatoes are more energy-packed than any other popular vegetable.<sup>3</sup> 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.

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## REFERENCES

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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/>.