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Australia's [Physical Activity Guidelines](#) recommend that we're active on most, preferably all, days of the week. With that in mind, it's incredibly important to consider how we fuel and hydrate our bodies.

There are three key macronutrients that make up the foods that we eat, all of which are essential in a healthy, balanced diet. These macronutrients are carbohydrates, protein and fat. Each of these macronutrients provide us with energy and play a crucial role in the body through a wide variety of important functions.

Carbohydrates are the body's preferred source of energy, especially for the brain. Dietary fibre is a type of carbohydrate and is responsible for keeping the digestive system healthy by supporting gut health and bowel health. Protein is responsible for building and repairing the muscles and tissues in the body. Fats are used in the body as an energy source, they store and transport fat-soluble vitamins and also play a crucial role in hormone production. Water is also considered to be an important nutrient as it is essential for most of our body's functions, such as regulating body temperature and blood volume. Water cannot be stored in the body and needs to be regularly consumed to make up for losses through sweat and other functions.

Each of these macronutrients can aid in maximising our performance when we are physically active. The amounts of these nutrients that we need is individualised to each person and will depend on the type and the intensity of the exercise that we do. Here are some examples of food sources for each of these macronutrients:

Carbohydrate-rich foods	Protein-rich foods	Fat-rich foods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Starchy vegetables, including legumes/beans - Fruit - Grain (cereal) foods, such as breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa and barley - Milk and yoghurt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans - Milk, yoghurt and cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choose unsaturated (healthy) fats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o E.g. Avocados, nuts and seeds, olives, cooking oils made from plants or seeds, fish - Avoid saturated (unhealthy) fats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o E.g. butter, coconut oil, processed meats, cream, ice cream, processed foods

When considering nutrition and hydration strategies surrounding exercise, it can be useful to think about three windows of opportunity: before, during and after exercise. Each of these time points are occasions to fuel and hydrate our bodies. With that being said, the intensity and timing of exercise can significantly influence our nutrition and hydration needs.