

Functional Foods and Sports Performance

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Exercise nutrition is new discipline that has received much attention in recent years. The progression in sports has led to a significant development in research and formulation nutritional supplements. Active individuals are looking for alternative fuel to boost their sporting performance by using nutrient or food substance. Functional foods are foods that provide health benefits beyond basic nutrition by virtue of physiologically active food components (functional ingredients or bioactive components) that present in these foods and bioactive components can either be naturally occurring or added to the food. Functional foods are not nutraceuticals or supplements. There are a wide variety of products that are available commercially; sports drinks, carbohydrate-rich energy products (sports gels and sports bar), protein and protein components, vitamins, minerals and herbal extracts. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that these foods and ingredients are not considered as a magic bullet or solution for enhancing sporting performance. Healthy and properly designed diet is only one aspect of a comprehensive approach to improve performance and overall good health. The presentation focuses on the functional foods that postulated to enhance performances and some local nutrition substance that are available but with limited information on efficacy and safety, which requires further research. Standard guidelines for the use and assessment of sports functional foods should be established on the basis of substantive scientific evidence based effectiveness.