

“When I was playing volleyball the coach gave us dried fruit each time we came off the court. Now I’ve started carrying it with me all the time. I usually eat some just before a test or a hard class.”

—Dana Magnuson, 16

Did you ever notice that when you’ve gone a long time without eating you get grouchy? That’s not just because you’re wishing you could eat. It’s because eating — and not eating — affects the level of neurotransmitters in your body. Lack of food causes a decline in serotonin which causes you to feel nervous and angry. As soon as you put some food in your system — especially if it’s complex carbohydrates which increase the level of serotonin — you begin to feel happier and more relaxed.

ALCOHOL: A Peculiar Carbohydrate

Alcohol is a carbohydrate, so theoretically it should be a part of a performance diet, right? Well, here’s where theory and practice disagree.

Because of its unusual characteristics, alcohol does not function like other carbohydrates. In fact, its effects are opposite those of regular carbohydrates. Instead of giving you energy, it saps your energy. Instead of helping you think clearly, it clouds your thinking. Instead of giving you more muscular strength it decreases your coordination. The result is that although alcohol is a carbohydrate, it’s the only *anti-performance carbohydrate* we know.

