

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN INTAKE OF SUGARY AND SPORTS-SPECIFIC FOOD AND ORAL HEALTH OUTCOMES IN COMPETITIVE ATHLETES

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OBJECTIVE

This cross-sectional study aimed to:

- Describe how often adult athletes consume sugary foods and sports-specific products.
- Explore the relationship between these dietary habits and oral health risks.

METHODOLOGY

We conducted a cross-sectional survey with 80 adult athletes (mean age 24.2 ± 4.0 years; 70% male). Participants completed a structured questionnaire and underwent clinical oral examinations.

Dietary Assessment

The questionnaire covered:

- Meal frequency
- Consumption of sugary foods (e.g., sweets, soft drinks)
- Intake of sports-specific carbohydrate products (e.g., isotonic gels and drinks)
- Although the dietary questionnaire was not fully validated, it was developed with input from a registered nutritionist to ensure clarity and relevance. Future research should employ validated dietary tools for more precise data.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the importance of distinguishing between general sugary foods and sports-specific carbohydrate products when evaluating their impact on oral health. Although sports foods are vital for performance, their sugar content can present a risk if not managed carefully. The findings support the development of educational programs involving both nutrition and dental health professionals to help athletes balance performance nutrition with oral health preservation.

Further research using validated dietary assessment methods is recommended to better understand and prevent oral health risks among athletes.

REFERENCES

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INTRODUCTION

Nutrition plays a crucial role in both overall health and athletic performance and can significantly influence oral health. Athletes often consume specific foods and beverages to meet their energy demands, including carbohydrate-rich sports products such as isotonic drinks and energy gels. While these sports foods support athletic performance, many contain sugars that, when consumed frequently, may negatively affect oral health.

RESULTS

Meal Frequency:
53.8% consumed 2–3 meals/day
45% consumed 4–5 meals/day

Sugary Food Consumption:
53.8% reported occasional intake
36.3% reported regular intake

Sports Product Use:
31.2% used sports-specific products regularly

A significant association was found between lower frequency of sugar intake and fewer dental caries ($p < 0.001$). Athletes who rated their oral health positively also tended to follow healthier dietary patterns.

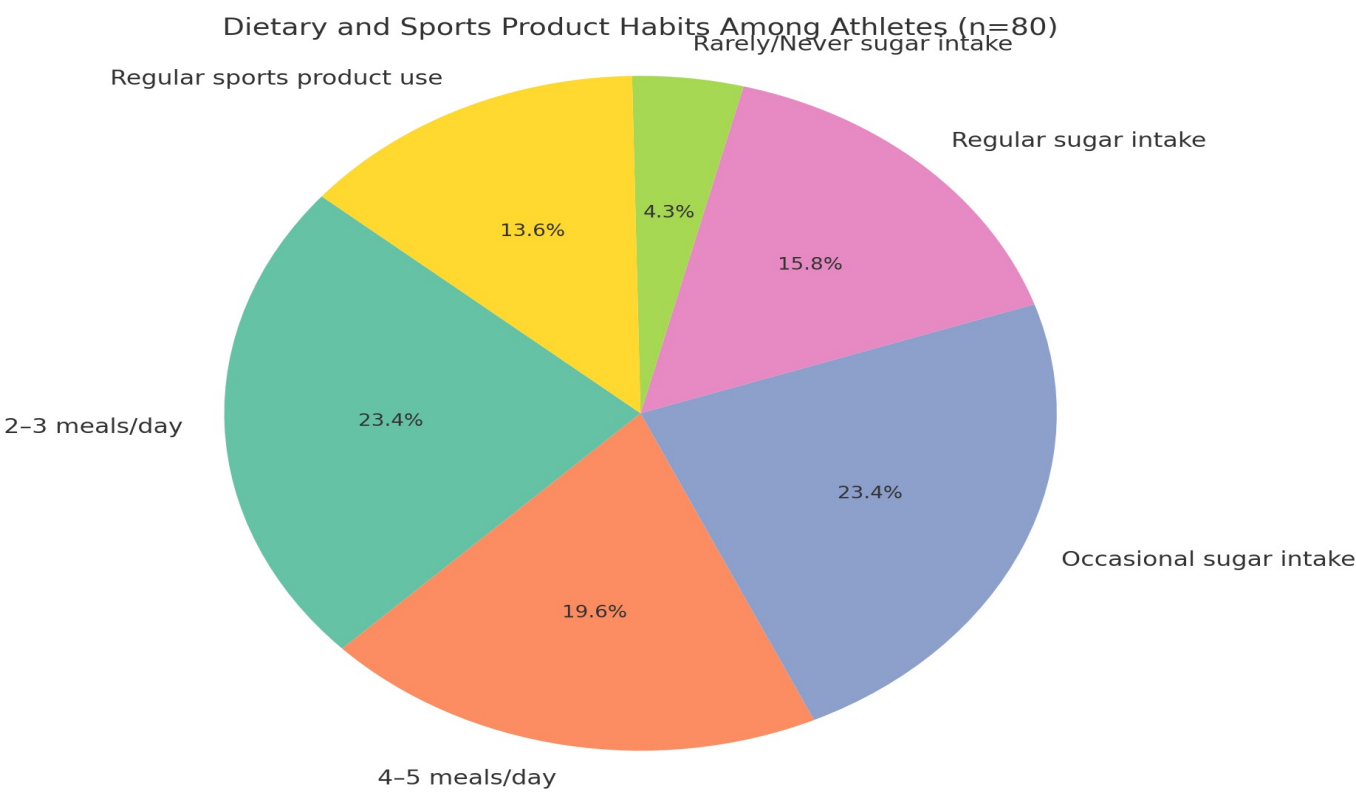


Table 1 – Frequency of Food Intake and Use of Sports Products Among Athletes