



IMG PHYSICAL THERAPY

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How to Increase a Young Athlete's Performance Through Nutrition!

There is no such thing as a miracle food to help an athlete train harder or compete better, no matter how hard coaches, players, and parents look. More important than finding a miracle food, eating properly can help prevent poor performance from fatigue, dehydration, and stomach related issues. What can make the biggest difference in an athlete's level of performance is their overall diet and timing of meals.

Where Do We Get Our Energy?

Carbohydrates: There are 2 types of carbs: simple carbohydrates and complex carbohydrates.

Simple Carbs (Quick energy) give you that jump start power and are used immediately.

*Fruits, fruit juices, sugar based snacks and drinks, white bread, white pasta, and baked goods

Complex carbs (Sustained energy) are slowly broken down and help you sustain energy levels to compete at your best all day long.

*Whole grains (brown rice, whole grain breads), fruits, and vegetables.

When choosing carbs: If at all possible avoid simple carbs (junk food) and pick complex carbs.

Protein: Protein is needed to build and repair muscles. Protein-rich foods include fish, lean meat and poultry, dairy products, beans, nuts, and soy products. While protein is important, a high-protein diet is not recommended for athletes and replacing carbohydrates with protein can actually impair athletic performance. Without adequate carbs an athlete will tire quickly and won't have the energy to train or compete.

Fats: Fats are a major source of energy. Fats can be found in nuts, seeds, olives, animal products. There are good fats and not so good fats (fried food). **Omega 3** helps us learn and remember the plays and new techniques and can help to limit the inflammation in our joints. **Omega 6**, helps with vision and aids our nerves to help react to various situations.

Vitamins and minerals: Vitamins help Carbs, Proteins and Fats do their job. Calcium and iron are two important minerals for athletes. Calcium helps build strong bones. Calcium-rich foods include low-fat dairy products like milk, yogurt, and cheese, as well as leafy green vegetables such as broccoli. Iron helps carry oxygen to all the different body parts that need it. Iron-rich foods include lean meat, chicken, tuna, salmon, eggs, dried fruits, leafy green vegetables, and fortified whole grains. B-Vitamins are Nature's natural energy source. Minerals work with Carbs to create energy, help supply muscles with oxygen, and help heal cuts and bruises.

Water: Water is a necessary tool for us to maintain focus, motor control, body temperature and to fight off fatigue. It's important for young athletes to drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration, which can zap strength, energy, and coordination and lead to heat-related illness. Even mild dehydration can affect athletic performance.

Prior to activity, each player should drink 12-20 ounces of water. Thirst is not a reliable indicator of hydration status. Athletes should drink water or other fluids **5 to 9 ounces every 15 to 20 minutes during physical activity**. It's important to drink afterwards to restore fluid lost through sweat.

Although many sports drinks are available, plain water is usually enough to keep kids hydrated. Sports drinks are designed to provide energy and replace electrolytes — such as sodium and potassium — that athletes lose in sweat. Sports drinks may be a good choice for kids who participate in strenuous physical activity for more than 1 hour because after exercising for 60 to 90 minutes, the body has used up its readily available sources of energy. Sports drinks are also a good alternative for kids who participate in sports but won't drink enough water. Sports drinks should not be consumed at meals.

Recovery from Exercise

Proper fueling before exercise is important to optimize performance, but nutrition for recovery from exercise is often overlooked. Our bodies rely upon a well-balanced array of nutrients, vitamins, and minerals to aid in rebuilding the parts of our body that have been stressed during exercise. Refueling after a workout with a well-rounded set of carbohydrates, proteins, and healthy fats will help your body reap the most benefit from your hard effort. Water is key to replace the fluids that you have lost during your activity. **After exercise, players should drink at least 24 ounces of water or sports drink for every pound lost during exercise.**

The human body is focused on "recovering," **within 30-45 minutes after activity**. Some examples of foods that could be eaten after exercise include: An energy, protein, or granola bar, trail mix with fruits and nuts, a smoothie or juice with high quality protein powder, or a PB&J sandwich on whole grain bread.

Once you *have time* to sit and eat a larger meal, eat more high quality proteins, complex carbohydrates and healthy fats, in addition to water, juice, or milk.

Sleeping: Sleep is your body's prime opportunity to recover. When the body is at rest, the repair of our muscular, cardiovascular, skeletal, and immune systems can go to work. The CDC recommends that, in general, teens have 9-10 hours and adults 7-8 hours of sleep each day.

To get the most out of your sleep, try to go to bed and wake up around the same time. Avoid stimulating activities in bed, especially TV, iPhones, laptops, and all forms of electronic devices. You may find that your children sleep better and longer on days that they exercise.

Proper Nutrition (Energy) + Rest (Recovery) = HIGH PERFORMANCE

Game Day

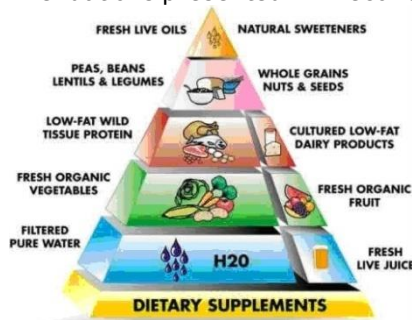
It's important for kids to eat well on game days. The meal itself should not be very different from what they've eaten throughout training. Athletes can choose healthy foods they believe enhance their performance and don't cause any problems like an upset stomach.

A meal 2-3 hours before activity should have plenty of carbs and a moderate amount of protein. The meal should be low in fat and fiber because fat and fiber take longer to digest, which can cause an upset stomach.

If kids eat less than 2-3 hours before game or practice, serve a lighter meal or snack that includes easy-to-digest carbohydrate-containing foods, such as pasta, cereal, low fat yogurt, fruit, juice, crackers, or bread. Quality protein bars can be utilized in a pinch (Kind Bars).

Avoid eating high-fat foods including hot dogs, hamburgers, French fries, chips, donuts, and heavy cheeses. Avoid high sugary foods including soda, candy bars, candy, and caffeine. They provide a little boost of energy, but it is not long lasting and will leave the athlete drained (in the case of caffeine will speed up dehydration). Essentially avoid all fast food eating places. To help facilitate these choices, food should be prepared in advance of leaving the house. Otherwise, the convenience of fast food will outweigh proper nutrition.

After the game or event, follow the recommendations presented in "Recovery From Exercise."





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Meal and Snack Suggestions

Minimize food that comes from vending machines, boxes, or bags and try to stick to real whole foods. The best balance for active kids: 50-55% of calories from carbohydrates, such as bread, cereal, rice and pasta; 10-15% from protein food like meat, poultry, fish, dry beans and nuts; and 25-30% from fats such as oils, seeds, and nuts.

Examples of Meals at Home

- Breakfast:** Low-fat yogurt with some granola and a banana and orange juice
Whole-grain cereal and low-fat milk with fresh fruit.
- Lunch:** Chicken or bean burritos with low-fat cheese, lettuce, and tomatoes
Turkey, ham, or roast beef sandwich with leaf lettuce and tomato on whole-wheat bread, fruit, & milk.
- Dinner:** Grilled chicken breasts with rice and vegetables
Chicken stir-fry with vegetables, fruit cup, low-fat milk
Pasta with red sauce and lean ground beef or turkey, salad, low fat yogurt

Healthy Packable Snacks:

- Muffins: Banana, oatmeal, blueberry
- Whole Grain crackers, bagels, pita bread
- Homemade granola bars with dried fruit, nuts, dark chocolate.
- Animal crackers, Fig Newtons, graham crackers
- Fresh fruits: oranges, apples, pears, bananas, dried fruit, fruit cup
- Protein Bars
- Pretzels, trail mix
- Juice boxes
- Milk-based puddings

EAT THIS

VS.

DO NOT EAT THIS

- Bagels & Healthy Muffins
- Grilled Chicken Sandwich
- Salad or Baked Potato
- Pasta with Tomato (red) Sauce
- Turkey, grilled chicken, roast beef, veggie hoagie
- Frozen yogurt with granola and fruit
- Milk, Juice, Sports Drinks
- Water
- Subway, Sheetz, Wawa hoagies & Fruit

- Donuts, Cupcakes, Croissants
- Big Mac, Chick-fil-a, Fried Fish
- French Fries and Onion Rings
- Pasta with Cream (white) Sauce
- Meatball, pepperoni, Salami hoagie
- Ice cream, Pie, Cake
- Soda, Red Bull, Monster, Slushies
- Tea, Coffee, all Drinks with Caffeine
- McDonalds, BK, Wendy's, Chick-Fil-a

