

Sports Nutrition Guidelines

University at Albany
Department of Athletics

*Personal nutrition education is available to all student-athletes.
Please make an appointment to discuss your individual
performance needs.*

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5 sports nutrition rules to play by...

1. **PERFORMANCE FOODS** - Eat a variety of nutritious foods that support athletic performance.
2. **WEIGHT MANAGEMENT** - Maintain a healthy weight for your sport.
3. **MEAL TIMING** - Eat at the right time to support practices, conditioning and recovery.
4. **PRE-COMPETITION NUTRITION** - Eat to win!
5. **HYDRATION** - Good hydration is essential for workouts and competition.

1. Performance Foods

- Athletes need carbohydrates. It's important to eat carbohydrate rich foods with some protein to fuel your workouts and maximize recovery. Some good choices include breads, bagels, pasta, rice, beans, starchy vegetables (potatoes, corn, and peas), cereals and oatmeal.
- Athletes should eat adequate protein to repair, maintain and build muscles. Good choices include eggs, chicken, lean beef, pork, fish, beans, tofu, nuts and peanut butter and low-fat dairy products (milk, yogurt and cheese).
- Fats help you to feel satisfied and absorb certain vitamins. Healthy fats can be found peanut butter, nuts, olive oil and salmon.
- Fruits and vegetables are critical since they are a rich source of antioxidants which help keep athletes healthy to play their best.
- Make your plate a "Performance Plate" by filling about 1/2 your plate with CARBOHYDRATES, 1/4 with PROTEIN and at least 1/4 with VEGETABLES.

Here's an example of a typical day of performance foods:

Breakfast: Whole grain toast with peanut butter, banana, skim milk or a bowl of high protein Kashi cereal with skim milk, banana and juice

Mid-morning snack: Trail mix (cheerios, almonds, raisins)

Lunch: Turkey sub with light mayo, apple, oatmeal cookie or Thin crust pizza, raw veggies with dip, graham crackers

Mid-afternoon snack: Apple and string cheese

Dinner: Pasta with chicken and marinara sauce, side salad with Italian dressing and frozen yogurt or Turkey burger on a bun with lettuce and tomato, baked sweet potato, broccoli and a chocolate chip cookie

Evening Snack: Low-fat popcorn and chocolate milk

Make an appointment to find out more about the best foods for you. Get advice on shopping and cooking.

2. Weight Management

If you need to lose weight:

- Subtract 500-700 calories a day from what you are eating now. This can be accomplished by avoiding foods with empty calories such as candy and soda or just eating half the amount of certain foods. For example, one slice of pizza instead of two or a six inch sub instead of a foot-long.
- You still need to eat plenty of whole grain carbohydrates and protein. Protein is especially important since it will help keep you satisfied and maintain muscle mass during your weight loss.
- Eliminate high-fat foods like fried foods, chips, whole milk dairy products, creamy soups, dressings and rich desserts. Make healthy substitutions like baked potatoes for French fries, mustard for mayonnaise and frozen yogurt for premium ice cream.
- Fill up on these delicious low calorie foods like fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Save the sports drinks for hard work outs and games and drink water in between.
- DIET AT NIGHT- that means eating enough during the day to fuel your activities and not saving all your calories for the evening.

If you need to gain weight:

- Healthy weight gain is dependent on eating more of the right kinds of foods that will increase muscle mass: whole grain carbohydrates, protein and healthy fats.
- Increase your calorie intake by adding an extra 500-1,000 calories a day. For example:
 - At each meal, eat until you are satisfied then eat a little bit more.
 - Drink fruit juices or milk with meals. However, if drinking with meals fills you up then pass on having too much liquid with meals and chew your calories. Save the high calorie drinks for in between meals.
 - Don't sleep through breakfast – you will be missing a good source of calories.
 - Eat concentrated calories like nuts and dried fruit.
 - Fill up on starchy vegetables like corn, peas, potatoes, sweet potatoes.
 - Snack often. Trail mixes, peanut butter on a bagel, smoothies and sports bars are good.
 - Drink high-calories fruit juices and smoothies (with protein powder) during the day.
 - Eat before going to bed. Some suggestions are cereal and milk, toast with peanut butter and honey, graham crackers and pudding, frozen yogurt.

Off-season is the best time to change your weight. However, if you must lose or gain weight while playing your sport, you can do it with moderate adjustments to your diet. Make an appointment for a weight management plan designed just for you.

3. Meal Timing

An athlete needs to eat the right foods at the right time to fuel activity and recover from the activity.

- Depending on your workout/practice schedule, you should allow enough time to digest your food: 3-4 hours for a large meal, 2-3 hours for a smaller meal, 1-2 hours for a liquid meal or small snack. (Of course this depends on your own tolerance.)
- Within 30 minutes after your workout, eat a carbohydrate/protein snack to maximize recovery. Suggestions for quick recovery snacks and mini-meals are egg sandwiches, instant oatmeal, peanut butter on a bagel, yogurt and a banana, chocolate milk, trail mix, fruit smoothies, protein drinks and bars, cereals with low-fat milk (Total, Kashi, Cheerios), low-fat cheese with whole-grain crackers and fruit.
- To get the most out of your training program, use the meal timing guide below to help you schedule meals and snacks.

If your workout or practice is at 7:00 am	If your workout or practice is at 10:00 am	If your workout or practice is at 2:00 pm	If your workout or practice is at 8:00 pm
<p>Fuel: Eat something light by 6:00 am. (Banana or granola bar are good choices.) <i>If you can't eat early, have a bowl of cereal with milk or a similar snack the night before.</i></p> <p>Recovery Breakfast: Within 30 minutes after your workout, eat breakfast to aid muscle recovery and restore muscle glycogen.</p> <p>Fuel: Lunch Afternoon snack Dinner</p>	<p>Fuel: Have breakfast by 7:00 am.</p> <p>Recovery Snack: Within 30 minutes after your workout, eat a snack to aid muscle recovery and restore muscle glycogen.</p> <p>Fuel: Lunch Afternoon snack Dinner</p>	<p>Fuel: Eat breakfast and then a light lunch by 12:00 pm or a substantial brunch at 10:00 am.</p> <p>Recovery Snack: Within 30 minutes after your workout, eat a snack to aid muscle recovery and restore muscle glycogen.</p> <p>Fuel: Afternoon snack Dinner</p>	<p>Fuel: Eat breakfast and lunch with snacks during the day. Be sure to drink fluids all day long.</p> <p>Fuel: Have dinner by 5:00 pm. Good choices include pasta with tomato sauce or chicken with rice or potatoes. Don't forget vegetables!</p> <p>Recovery Snack: Chocolate milk or cereal and milk is a good late night recovery snack</p>

Make an appointment to go over your class and practice schedule and identify the best times for you to fuel yourself and maximize performance.

4. Pre-Competition Nutrition

What you eat and how much you eat before a game will affect performance.

A breakfast pre-competition meal should include plenty of carbohydrates like cereals (hot or cold), breakfast bars, pancakes, waffles, muffins, smoothies, fruit and fruit juices and smaller portions of protein such as eggs, lean or low-fat breakfast meats, nuts or peanut butter.

A lunch/dinner pre- competition meal should emphasize carbohydrates such as pasta, potatoes, rice, breads, bagels, pitas, tortillas, fruits, vegetables, sports drinks and smoothies. The meal should include moderate portions of lean turkey, chicken, beef, pork and fish. Eggs, tofu, veggie burgers and nuts and peanut butter are also good choices.

Pre-game meals cannot make up for a poor diet. Eat like an athlete all week and your pre-game meal will “top off the tank” with carbohydrates for energy and protein to keep you satisfied. Avoid fried foods and high fat meats and cheeses. Save the cheese burgers for after the game!

30 min. to 1 hour pre-competition	1-2 hours pre-competition	2-3 hours pre-competition	3-4 hours pre-competition
Sports drink and water	Sports bar Orange slices/banana Sports drink/water	Turkey sandwich or peanut butter and jelly on a bagel Banana 100% juice Sports drink/water	Pasta with meat sauce or chicken Steamed mixed veggies Fresh fruit Whole grain bread 100%juice Sports drink/water

Which foods work best for you? Make an appointment to identify your optimum pre-game foods.

5. Hydration

Athletes should make hydration a #1 priority especially in warmer weather. Workouts, practices and competitions will be more successful if you are well hydrated. Drinking lots of fluids will help prevent muscle cramping and more serious problems such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

- Don't wait to feel thirsty, that means you are already getting dehydrated.
- Monitor your hydration status by color and frequency. Your urine should be pale yellow and you should urinate at least every two hours.
- Keep drinking all day. If you need to watch calories stick to water most of the time and consume sports drinks or juices during workouts/games for energy.
- Limit caffeinated drinks (energy drinks, coffee, tea and soda). They can increase your heart rate and may contribute to dehydration.
- Drink at least 16 ounces (2 cups) of water or sports drink 1 hour before workout/practice. Take frequent fluid breaks.
- If you are hot, be sure to pour as much water in you as you would on you!
- Weigh yourself before and after practice (with as few clothes on as possible) and notice how much weight you lost after practice. That's primarily due to fluids and you should drink 3 cups (24 ounces) of water or sports drink for every pound you lost during practice.
- Try not to lose more than 2 pounds per practice session. If you workout again later in the day be sure your weight is back to normal.
- You may need to replace salt lost through sweat. Eat something salty before a practice to retain fluids. You can also eat something salty after practice to replace salt. Salted pretzels are a convenient salty/carbohydrate snack.
- Avoid alcohol because it will impair performance, contribute to dehydration and add unwanted empty calories.

Make an appointment to learn how you can you optimize your personal hydration plan.