

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The start of our new season is just around the corner! As coach, I'd like to take this opportunity to discuss our team's preparation for practices and competitions.

Making sure we have the right equipment, uniforms and skills to play the game goes a long way in our team performance. This year, I'd like you to think about good nutrition as an essential piece of equipment.

Eating healthy food and staying hydrated will accomplish two big jobs: keeping athletes healthy (and, if injury occurs, helping them heal as quickly as possible); and delaying or preventing fatigue and maintaining high energy levels.

Pack your child's game bag with healthy snacks to eat during practices and games, or to share with teammates afterwards. Good examples are: fresh fruits like orange wedges, watermelon, bananas, grapes or raisins; whole grain cereals or cereal bars; trail mix with nuts; and crackers or bagels.

To avoid dehydration, athletes should drink plenty of water before, during, and after practices or games. Diluted fruit juices and sports drinks are also acceptable, but water is preferred. **Pop will not be allowed at practices or competitions.** The sugar content slows down the body's absorption of water. Also, beware of caffeinated sports drinks, which increase the risk of dehydration.

The other coaches and I plan to follow these tips to encourage good sports nutrition. Thanks for helping our athletes have a successful and healthy season.

Sincerely,

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Sincerely,

Dear Athlete,

I hope you are as excited as I am for this season! We have a great team this year. I'm expecting big things from all my athletes.

Now is a good time to think about how we will prepare for a winning season. You will have to practice hard to build up your body. This year, I also want you to eat healthy foods to train for practices and competitions.

Bring healthy snacks to school, practices and games. Snacks like fruit (oranges, grapes, bananas), bagels, trail mix, and cereal bars are all good ideas. I also want you to eat healthy meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Pop will not be allowed at practices or competitions. You can drink water, fruit juice or sports drinks. Water is the best way to fill your body before, during, and after practice or games.

Eating the right food and drinking water will give our team an extra edge over our competition. I plan to follow these rules. I believe you can, too!

Let's have a great, fun season!

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Food Guide Pyramid

A healthy diet is necessary for athletes to perform at optimal levels and avoid injury. All young athletes need to include a variety of nutritious foods in their diets. The Food Guide Pyramid is an excellent guide because it:

- Incorporates a variety of nutritious foods
- Emphasizes high-carbohydrate foods like breads, cereals, pastas, and vegetables needed to build energy stores
- Guides the selection of a lower-fat diet
- Offers a variety of foods within each food group so meals can be built around foods young people like

Because of rapid growth and development and high levels of physical activity, teen athletes should eat the higher number of recommended from each food group. This is especially true for the bread, cereal, rice, and pasta group, and the fruit and vegetable groups.

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Food Guide Pyramid

A Guide to Daily Food Choices



Visit www.mypyramid.gov for a detailed analysis of your diet and personalized recommendations for healthy eating.

Sample Menu

Meal	Menu	Meal	Menu
Breakfast	Pancakes with mixed berries Milk	Snack	Water Granola bar
Snack	Bagel with peanut butter Orange juice	Snack	Raisins Crackers Fruit juice
Lunch	Cheese pizza Carrots and celery sticks Graham crackers Milk	Dinner	Roasted chicken breast and rice Green beans Bread Small salad Milk

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Power Breakfasts

Skipping breakfast is the biggest nutritional mistake athletes make. Breakfast doesn't require a lot of time to prepare. Here are some quick and nutritious breakfast ideas:

- Yogurt with cereal
- Bagel with low-fat cream cheese
- Fruit smoothies or instant breakfast
- Raisins and peanuts
- Bran muffin
- Graham crackers with peanut butter
- Pita bread with cheese

In addition to the above suggestions, cereal is, and should be, a common breakfast for many people. When recommending a cereal, suggest varieties that are high in fiber, iron, and calcium, and low in added sugar or fat (e.g., Product 19, Total, Complete). These enriched cereals will provide a healthy start to the day.

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Food Power for Vegetarian Athletes

Athletes don't necessarily need foods of animal origin to reach their full potential. Many elite athletes choose a vegetarian diet. Careful meal planning is important to obtain all the essential nutrients for growth and activity. The following suggestions will help you plan and select the foods necessary to fuel you through training sessions and competition.

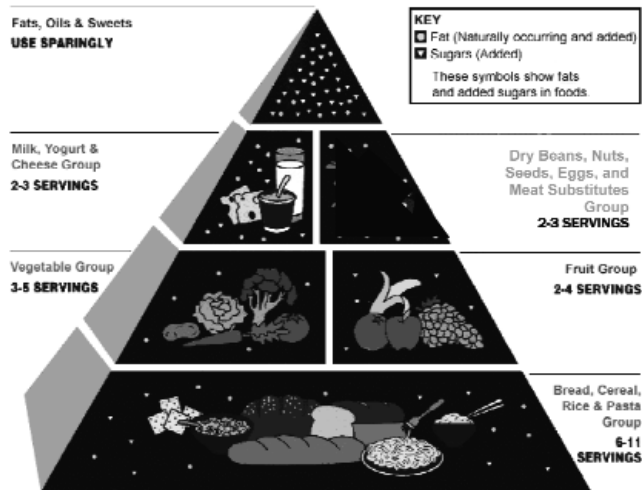
- Include complex carbohydrates; they are the cornerstone of a vegetarian diet. Whole grain cereals and breads, legumes, fruits, and vegetables are examples. Carbohydrates supply the highest quality body fuel and leave protein for those activities protein does best: building and repairing body tissues and muscle.
- Eat a variety of foods and pay special attention to your protein, calcium, iron, zinc, and vitamin B12 needs. Be sure to include foods rich in these nutrients such as: cooked dried beans and peas, nuts, seeds, tofu, fortified soy milk, eggs, fortified cereals, and dairy products.
- Include fortified soy milk and fortified cereals such as Product 19 or Total to help provide adequate calcium, iron, zinc and vitamin B12 if dairy foods and eggs are omitted. Include a good source of vitamin C with fortified cereals to enhance iron absorption.
- Eat six to eight meals daily to best meet your energy demands. Small, frequent meals provide a steady energy source and are easier to digest than three large meals.
- Combine several complex carbohydrates at meals and snacks (e.g., a bean burrito, brown rice, carrots, and an orange).
- Emphasize dark green vegetables such as bok choy, kale, broccoli, and mustard greens for rich sources of vitamin A, calcium and iron.
- Choose a variety of fruits and fruit juices, especially those high in vitamin C. Oranges, grapefruit, tangerines, strawberries, raspberries, kiwi, honeydew melon, papaya, and mangos are excellent sources of vitamin C.
- Aim for the recommended amounts of daily servings in each food group, and select a wide variety of foods within each group.

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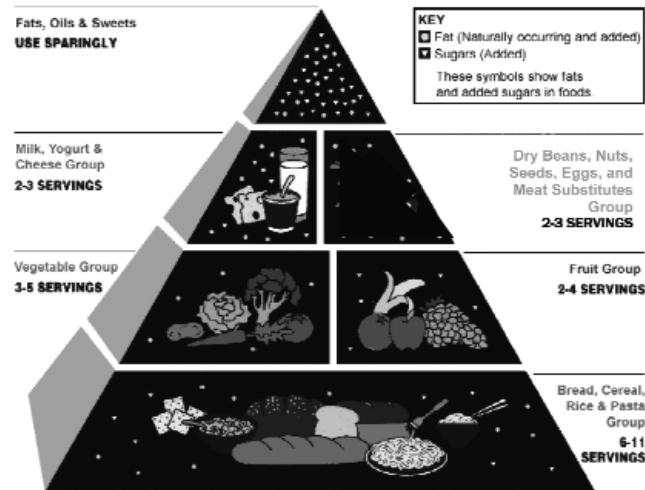
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Food Guide for Vegetarian Meal Planning



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Sample Menu

Breakfast

3 whole grain waffles
1/2 cup mixed berries
1 cup juice

Snack

1 cup yogurt
1/2 cup mandarin oranges

Lunch

3 ounce vegetarian burger
1 cup steamed broccoli
1/2 cup mixed fruit
1 cup low-fat milk

Pre-Practice Snack

1 bagel with peanut butter
Water

Post-Practice Snack

2 graham crackers
Carrots, celery and broccoli
Water

Dinner

Bean & cheese burrito
Lettuce, tomatoes and salsa
1 cup brown rice
1 orange
1 cup low-fat milk

Snack

1 cup fortified cereal (e.g., Product 19 or Total)
1/2 cup strawberries
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Win With Water

- Water is an essential nutrient in any diet.
- Hydrated athletes perform better than those who are dehydrated. Well-hydrated athletes are less prone to injury, especially late in a competition when they are fatigued.
- Several factors cause athletes to dehydrate more quickly:
 - ◆ Hot temperatures and high humidity
 - ◆ High intensity or long workouts
 - ◆ Windy conditions

WHAT CAN ATHLETES DO?

- Drink water prior to, during and after competition to prevent dehydration. Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink water. If you feel thirsty, you are already dehydrated.
- Drink moderate amounts (4 to 8 ounces) of cool water at frequent intervals (about every 15 minutes).
- Drink diluted 100 percent fruit juice as an alternative to water (1 cup of water for every 1 cup of juice).

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Win With Water

THE SCOOP ON SPORTS DRINKS

- Water is best for competitions up to 90 minutes with breaks in activity or 60 minutes of continuous activity.
- Sports drinks with small amounts of sugar and sodium, and moderate amounts of carbohydrates (not above 8 percent) help rehydrate the body more quickly than water when competing in events that go beyond 90 minutes. Examples include Gatorade, Powerade and Allsport.
- Caffeinated sports drinks can promote dehydration and should be avoided. Although this is not an exhaustive list, Prolyte Energy Drinks, Extreme Ripped Force and Red Bull are examples of sports drinks high in caffeine.

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Game-day Grub

BEFORE THE GAME

A pre-event meal will provide athletes with the necessary energy to participate at their highest level. Pre-event meals should be high in carbohydrates, low-to-moderate in protein and low in fat. Athletes should eat foods two to three hours before competition to avoid cramps or stomach discomfort. They should also stick to foods that are familiar to them.

AFTER THE GAME

Post-game nutrition is critical for athletes. The first three to four hours after competition are especially important. During this time the body is most efficient at replenishing energy stores. Encourage athletes to refuel with a healthy snack or meal after practices or games.

ALL-DAY EVENTS

At all-day events, it is often difficult to avoid eating within one hour of performance. Encourage athletes to eat several mini-meals over the course of the day. Meals should be small and low in sugar and fat. Foods and beverages available at the concession stand are often poor choices for athletes. Plan ahead and encourage athletes to bring healthy foods and beverages to events.

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IDEAS FOR GOOD GAME-DAY GRUB

Dried, fresh, canned or frozen fruit low in fiber (plums, melons, cherries, peaches)
Breads, bagels, breadsticks
100 percent fruit or vegetable juice
Lean meat, low-fat cheese
Yogurt
Cottage cheese (low-fat)
Baked potato
Cereal with low-fat milk (skim or 1 percent)
Pasta
Rice with vegetables or meat
Tortillas with beans, rice, vegetables or lean meats
Cheese and crackers
Gorp (peanuts, raisins, cereal and sunflower seeds)
Bananas with peanut butter
Broiled English muffin with pizza sauce and cheese

THINGS TO AVOID

Candy, sugar
Soda pop, tea, coffee, caffeine
Fried foods (they digest slowly and sit in the stomach)
Large meals
High-fat meats (e.g., hot dogs and bologna)

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Healthy Choices on the Run

In today's fast-moving, busy world it is sometimes difficult to find time to make a meal. Plan ahead to have these favorite, pre-practice or pre-game meals on hand during the season. If you only have time for something quick, consider a combination of several of the foods listed below:

- Oranges, bananas, pears, peaches, plums
- 100 percent fruit or vegetable juices
- Yogurt or milk
- Breadsticks
- Whole grain bread with jelly or peanut butter
- Cottage cheese (low-fat)
- Lean meats on breads or tortillas
- Broiled English muffin with pizza sauce and cheese
- Cold cereal and milk
- Crackers with cream cheese and jelly
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Healthy Choices on the Run

If your team does stop at a fast-food restaurant, the following choices are healthier.

Arby's

Junior Roast Beef Sandwich
Regular Roast Beef Sandwich
Martha's Vineyard Salad
Chicken Breast Filet Sandwich

Burger King

Tendergrill Chicken Sandwich
Fire-grilled Chicken Garden Salad
Fire-grilled Chicken Caesar Salad
Side Garden Salad
BK Veggie Burger w/o mayo
Chicken Whopper w/o mayo

Kentucky Fried Chicken

Tender Roast Sandwich w/o sauce
Honey BBQ Sandwich
Roasted Chicken Caesar Salad
w/light dressing and w/o croutons

McDonald's

Hamburger
Grilled Chicken Sandwich
Caesar Salad w/Grilled Chicken
California Cobb Salad w/Grilled Chicken
Ranch Salad w/Grilled Chicken
English Muffin
Hotcakes
Fruit and Yogurt Parfait

Pizza Hut

Ham Pizza (not pan or stuffed crust)
Veggie Lover's Pizza (not pan or stuffed crust)
Chicken Supreme Pizza (not pan or stuffed crust)

Subway

Six-inch Honey Mustard Ham,
Oven Roasted Chicken Breast,
Roast Beef, Turkey Breast, Turkey
Breast and Ham, Subway Club,
Sweet Onion Teriyaki, Veggie
Delite, Buffalo Chicken and Turkey
Pastrami Sandwiches
Turkey Breast Wrap
Grilled Chicken and Spinach Salad
Subway Club Salad

Taco Bell

Ranchero Chicken Soft Taco
Spicy Chicken Soft Taco
Grilled Steak Soft Taco
Gordita Baja Beef
Gordita Baja Chicken
Gordita Baja Steak
Bean Burrito
Fiesta Burrito - Chicken
Fiesta Burrito - Steak

Wendy's

Mandarin Chicken Salad
Spring Mix Salad
Fresh Fruit Cup
Low-fat Yogurt Cup with Granola
Junior Hamburger
Ultimate Chicken Grill Sandwich
Side Salad
Plain Baked Potato
Sour Cream and Chive Baked Potato
Chili

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California Cobb Salad w/Grilled Chicken
Ranch Salad w/Grilled Chicken
English Muffin
Hotcakes
Fruit and Yogurt Parfait

Pizza Hut

Ham Pizza (not pan or stuffed crust)
Veggie Lover's Pizza (not pan or stuffed crust)
Chicken Supreme Pizza (not pan or stuffed crust)

Subway

Six-inch Honey Mustard Ham,
Oven Roasted Chicken Breast,
Roast Beef, Turkey Breast, Turkey
Breast and Ham, Subway Club,
Sweet Onion Teriyaki, Veggie
Delite, Buffalo Chicken and Turkey
Pastrami Sandwiches
Turkey Breast Wrap
Grilled Chicken and Spinach Salad
Subway Club Salad

Taco Bell

Ranchero Chicken Soft Taco
Spicy Chicken Soft Taco
Grilled Steak Soft Taco
Gordita Baja Beef
Gordita Baja Chicken
Gordita Baja Steak
Bean Burrito
Fiesta Burrito - Chicken
Fiesta Burrito - Steak

Wendy's

Mandarin Chicken Salad
Spring Mix Salad
Fresh Fruit Cup
Low-fat Yogurt Cup with Granola
Junior Hamburger
Ultimate Chicken Grill Sandwich
Side Salad
Plain Baked Potato
Sour Cream and Chive Baked Potato
Chili

Misconceptions on Nutrition and Supplement Use

Athletes are bombarded with myths relating to nutrition and supplement use. As a parent or athlete, it is important to recognize these myths and know the facts.

Misconception #1:

Carbohydrates make you fat.

Fact:

Carbohydrates are not fattening. They are the most important nutrient in an athlete's diet. The body needs carbohydrates for energy. Muscles use carbohydrates when an athlete competes or practices. Excess calories of any kind, whether they are fat, carbohydrates or protein, increase weight.

Misconception #2:

Eating more protein or protein powders builds muscles.

Fact:

Although it is an important part of the diet, eating excess protein will not increase muscle growth; muscles grow through exercise. Excess protein, like excess fat, gets stored as fat. Protein supplements do not contain any more protein than a serving of meat, chicken or fish.

Misconception #3:

Low-fat foods are low in calories.

Fact:

Many low-fat foods have added sugar, making the food higher in calories. Be sure to read food labels.

Misconception #4:

Eating sugar (as contained in pop or candy bars) immediately before a competition will increase athletic performance by boosting energy.

Fact:

Eating sugars before competition may actually impair athletic performance. Sweets can cause rapid energy swings, which result in low blood sugar and less energy.

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Misconception #5:

Salt tablets are needed to replace sodium lost through sweating.

Fact:

Salt tablets should never be used. An athlete's priority should be to replace fluids, not salt. Salt tablets can increase heat disorders and decrease performance.

Misconception #6:

Vitamins will provide energy needed to perform better, even if the diet is not great.

Fact:

Vitamins do not provide energy. Taking vitamins does not eliminate the need for a balanced diet. There are many nutrients such as protein and fiber that cannot be obtained from a vitamin supplement.

Misconception #7:

Sports and energy bars enhance performance.

Fact:

Many sports and energy bars claim to provide energy needed for great performance. However, a healthy, balanced diet is the best way to have optimal performance. Many sports bars lack fiber, are high in calories and are expensive. Regular cereal bars provide as much nutrition at a much lower cost.

Misconception #8:

Creatine supplements boost athletic performance.

Fact:

There is no proof that taking creatine enhances athletic performance. Creatine supplements have been shown to cause cramps, muscle strains and diarrhea. The body makes a sufficient amount of creatine on its own. In fact, excess creatine is excreted in urine.

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Sports Nutrition Quiz

Do you know what to eat and drink to keep you in top shape for your sport? Take this quiz to find out!

1. You need energy for practices and events. Which combination of foods would be least helpful 1 hour before your event?
 - a. Cheerios and milk
 - b. Bagel, peach and fruit juice
 - c. Marshmallows and cookies
2. What is the best meal to give you energy for your evening game?
 - a. Fried chicken sandwich, French fries and lemon sherbet
 - b. Spaghetti with tomato sauce and bread
 - c. Bologna and cheese sandwich and corn chips
3. Which drink is the best choice during practice or a game?
 - a. Soda pop
 - b. Water
 - c. Sports drink
 - d. Fruit juice
4. You need a quick snack between games or events at a tournament. Which of the following choices at the concession stand would be your best bet?
 - a. Chips and lemonade
 - b. Hot dog and soda pop
 - c. Trail mix, apple and Gatorade
5. Which foods should you choose for breakfast to give you enough nutrition and energy to perform at your peak level?
 - a. Egg, cheese and bacon sandwich, and milk
 - b. Cereal with milk, toast with peanut butter, and juice
 - c. Doughnut and a fruit juice drink
(such as Fruitopia or Sunny Delight)
6. You should have a snack within 15 to 30 minutes after practice or competition.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Sports Nutrition Quiz

Do you know what to eat and drink to keep you in top shape for your sport? Take this quiz to find out!

1. You need energy for practices and events. Which combination of foods would be least helpful 1 hour before your event?
 - a. Cheerios and milk
 - b. Bagel, peach and fruit juice
 - c. Marshmallows and cookies
2. What is the best meal to give you energy for your evening game?
 - a. Fried chicken sandwich, French fries and lemon sherbet
 - b. Spaghetti with tomato sauce and bread
 - c. Bologna and cheese sandwich and corn chips
3. Which drink is the best choice during practice or a game?
 - a. Soda pop
 - b. Water
 - c. Sports drink
 - d. Fruit juice
4. You need a quick snack between games or events at a tournament. Which of the following choices at the concession stand would be your best bet?
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Sports Nutrition Quiz

ANSWERS

1. (c) Choice "c" is high in sugar and can result in less energy. The bagel, peach and fruit juice, as well as the cereal and milk, have complex carbohydrates that are easy to digest and give you vitamins and minerals. Plus, these choices also include fluids.
2. (b) This meal is loaded with complex carbohydrates, has some protein, and is low in fat. It will give you energy to play your best. Choices "a" and "c" have too much fat, which is slowly digested. Playing with a high-fat meal in your stomach is always a losing game plan.
3. (b) Water is the best drink to replace the fluid you lose when you play hard. Choice "a" has too much sugar and may cause cramps. "C" is a good choice if your game or meet lasts longer than 90 minutes or is especially intense. Water and fruit juice, mixed in equal amounts, is also a good beverage to rehydrate your body.
4. (c) Refueling your body during tournaments is important. You should eat mini-meals that are high in carbohydrates, have some protein, and are low in sugar and fat. Choices "a" and "b" have a lot of sugar or fat.
5. (b) Breakfast is especially important because it helps you start your day with energy. Choice "b" is well-balanced and provides energy to fuel your muscles. Choice "a" provides nutrients, but is high in fat. Foods high in fat take a long time to digest. This might leave you with food in your stomach at game time. Choice "c" contains a lot of fat and sugar.
6. (True) Refueling your body in the first 30 minutes after competition or practice is important. That's when your muscles are best able to replace the nutrients used during exercise. Foods that are good sources of complex carbohydrates are best. Try fresh fruit, graham crackers or a sandwich!

HOW DID YOU SCORE?

0 to 2 correct - you could end up on the nutrition sidelines.

You probably aren't giving your body enough healthy foods to perform at your top level. Make sure you eat a healthy breakfast every day as well as lunch, dinner and several healthy snacks. Talk to your coach for more ideas about how to eat like a winner!

3 to 4 correct - keep healthy eating habits going to earn a perfect "10". Looks like you are on the right track to perform your best. Make sure you continue to drink enough fluids to hydrate your body during practices and events, and choose healthy snacks for energy.

5 to 6 correct - you're a healthy eating champion!

Way to go! You know how to eat to compete! You are a role model for your teammates.

Sports Nutrition Quiz

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