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# In The Dawg House



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## 7 Signs the Young Swimmer Isn't Eating Enough Food

By Jill Castle, MS, RDN 4/17/2014

Food is fuel. Just like a car needs fuel to operate, so does the body. Without enough food, changes happen in the body affecting a number of daily functions, including athletic performance. Young swimmers may be at risk for under-eating or poor eating. Combine these with the high calorie demand of swimming and ongoing growth and it's easy to see that low food intake can be a real problem.

These 7 signs may signal the young swimmer needs more food:



**1. Weight loss or lack of weight gain:** Sudden weight loss is an obvious sign that food consumption is too low. In the growing athlete, a lack of expected annual weight gain is also a red flag. For instance, an average 7-year-old is expected to gain about 4 to 5 pounds per year, while an average 10-year-old will gain about 9 to 10 pounds per year. Adolescents, during their peak growth spurt, may gain even more. If expected weight gain isn't happening, look for eating patterns that may be responsible.



**2. Lack of growth:** Persistent or long-term shortages on food intake may affect a child or teen's height. This can be seen as stunting—a lack in height growth. Poor weight gain or weight loss is the first sign in this scenario, so be sure to act before it progresses to this irreversible outcome.

## Announcements:

- Please make sure to sign up online for jobs for our home meets to help make each meet a success.
- If you have any questions, please contact the office at (219) 838-DAWG (3294) anytime between 9 am - 4 pm, Monday - Friday.



(Continued on page 2)

## 7 Signs The Young Swimmer.....(cont.)

(Continued from page 1)



**3. Concentration:** The brain relies on glucose and other nutrients to operate effectively. Enough food provided at intervals of every 3 to 4 hours helps growing swimmers pay attention in class, stay focused for competition, learn and think.



**4. Chronic Fatigue:** Swimming burns calories and is physically demanding, making even some of the best swimmers struggle with fatigue. Poor food intake can amplify fatigue, and may promote a vicious cycle of exercise, exhaustion and not eating enough. Watch food intake so that the body has the nutrients available for growth and proper physical recovery.



**5. Frequent illness:** Illness is the enemy of athletic improvement. Getting sick with common colds, infections and viruses can be due, in part, to poor nutrition. Lack of nutritious food can also interfere with getting over an illness, prolonging the recovery period.



**6. Trouble sleeping:** With vigorous and frequent exercise, one would think that sleeping would be easy. However, poor nutrition may be linked to shorter duration of sleep, according to a 2013 study from the University of Pennsylvania. Researchers found that people who slept for 5 to 6 hours a night had diets that missed out on certain nutrients and had less variety overall. Those who slept longer (8-9 hours) had better diet quality. More research is needed in the area of nutrition and sleep, especially for athletes.

**7. Poor swimming performance:** Training hard and not improving? Flat times? Higher than normal race times? These may be signs that the amount and quality of food is off. Remember, food is fuel for working muscles. If nutrition is lackluster, swimming will be too. The good news—it's an easy fix!

If you see one or more of these signs, check food intake and the overall balance of nutrition. It's easy to increase and improve food intake, and a qualified nutrition professional can help. For individual guidance, find a sports registered dietitian/nutritionist here (<http://www.scandpg.org/>).

*Jill Castle, MS, RDN is a childhood nutrition expert and co-author of *Fearless Feeding: How to Raise Healthy Eaters from High Chair to High School* ([www.fearlessfeeding.com](http://www.fearlessfeeding.com)). She is the creator of *Just The Right Byte* ([www.justtherightbyte.com](http://www.justtherightbyte.com)), a childhood nutrition blog.*

## Coaches Corner—Nutritional Demands



While I am in no way, shape, or form, a certified nutritionist, I do know one thing. Swimmers need to be fueled properly and enough to meet the demands of their sport. Many of our swimmers are not.

I have had several “conversations” with several of our swimmers (and I am sure that I need to have this with many more who don’t speak up about it) about the lack of a sufficient level of caloric intake on a daily basis. I recall two conversations that I have had, and they have both been with our female swimmers, about the fact that they do not even come close to meeting their daily needs for calories. Both of them described to me what they ate on that particular day. And both.....didn’t even come close to a non-athletes daily caloric intake needs.....roughly between 1,400-1,800 calories!! Even if I were to give the benefit of the doubt and say that they had slow metabolisms.....they are still lower than they need for participating in a sport.

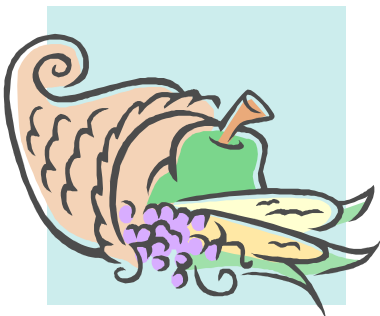
I will not even begin to state that our swimmers should be in a Michael Phelps caloric intake path (8,000 calories a day!!), however, they do need to know EXACTLY how many calories they need to eat during the day so that they are fueled enough to train practices every day. Each swimmer is different and varies slightly. But bottom line is the calories our swimmers need to take in if they are training at a high level every day will range between 3,000-4,000 calories per day. Anything less than that will result in poor performance, inability to train, and very sluggish athletes who are confused as to why they cannot drop time or swim faster even though they are working very hard.

During time off or when their swimming careers are done, that level of caloric intake is no longer necessary and will cause unwanted weight gain. However, while training, that will not happen and should never be a concern. What needs to be a concern of our parents and athletes are fueled for performance.

If you don’t enough gas in the gas tank of your car to go the entire distance of your trip, you’ll never make it to your destination!

Swimcerely.....Coach John

## Coaches Corner—Nutrition From A Swimmers Perspective



A big problem faced with many swimmers today is the nutritional intake we put into our bodies. As athletes, we need to have the minimum of three meals a day, breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Nutrition is a key component in all parts of training. The focus should be eating right all the time so it becomes a habit.

There are quite a few main functions of foods: energy, cellular growth (maintenance/repair), body growth, muscle growth, bone growth, immune system, and thermoregulation (ability to keep a steady body temperature). A person should never look at the calorie content, but more so at the nutritional value of the product. Foods that are full

## Coaches Corner From the Red Group (cont.)

of minerals include: dark color veggies, nuts, seeds, avocados, fish, and granola. One food that we should eat less of, is red meat because the low iron content.

When should swimmers eat certain types of foods? Always stay away from sweets before a big meet and at the end of the season. NEVER have sweets at swim meets. Instead, replace chocolate bars with granola bars, Greek yogurt, or pasta for a good source of protein and carbohydrates. Every swimmer needs to learn to eat before and after a workout or practice. Sometimes a quick snack may be needed during practice. Recovery foods right after workouts would include carbs and proteins like a turkey sandwich or nuts. A good recovery drink is chocolate milk, which prevents the muscles from breaking down. Energy drinks are a big NO, these cause the body to have energy for a short period of time instead of long lasting energy. Dietary supplements and multi vitamins are not necessarily the best for athletes, instead try to eat fruits and vegetables to get daily vitamin intake. Pop at a swim meet is also not healthy because of the sugar content; instead focus on drinking more water.



The importance of water is key in all physical activity. Fluid keeps you hydrated, helps with muscle contraction, and regulates body temperature. Staying hydrated helps glucose in working muscles and oxygen flow. Men need approximately 3 liters of water a day and women need 2.5 liters. At practice, the coaching staff would like to see everyone with a drink of some sort. We do not have a problem with swimmers taking drinks in between sets. Swimmers tend to sweat a lot in the pool, so drinking fluids helps to keep one hydrated while still working hard at practice.

If there are any questions or concerns about your child's nutrition, the coaching staff would gladly be willing to help. Let's make this season a good one and go dogs!

Happy Swimming!

Coach Aly

## TOP DOGS for the Meets



Senior State Championships - **Evan Holland** - 7.24 second average time drop. 47.62% team best times

**AWESOME JOB DAWGS!!!!!!**



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**Committment, Pride, Sportsmanship, Character**

[www.crownpointswimclub.org](http://www.crownpointswimclub.org)

#### Mission Statement

The Crown Point Swim Club is an aquatics program established to provide opportunities for our community through the sport of swimming. We are a USA Swimming and Indiana Swimming member committed to building excellence in athletes through the sport of swimming at the highest levels of competition. We are dedicated to the members of our not-for-profit organization to help provide our services at very little cost to all.

#### Vision Statement

Building the future of the community through safety in the water, healthy lifestyles, and physical development while achieving excellence in swimming, academics, and life.

#### Philosophy

*Commitment, Pride, Sportsmanship, Character*

We stress being committed to excellence both athletically and academically. We take pride in our organization, our athletes, and their families. We teach sportsmanship both in and out of the pool at all times. We build character through life lessons that will take our swimmers past their athletic ca-

## 2014 Club Sponsors

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Kevin E. Werner, Attorney at Law

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