

NUTRITION FOR SWIMMERS



Optimal nutrition includes healthy eating, exercise, hydration, adequate sleep and stress management

INCLUDE ALL OF THE FOOD GROUPS DAILY:

- **Carbohydrates** are our main source of energy. Choose complex carbohydrates: whole grain bread, oatmeal, quinoa, brown rice and whole grain cereal.
- **Protein** is important for building and repairing muscle. Choose lean sources: chicken, fish, eggs, nuts, beans and nut butters.
- **Dairy = calcium = strong bones.** Examples include milk, yogurt and cheese. Calcium can also be found in some fruits, vegetables and calcium fortified products. Vitamin D (sunshine vitamin) helps our bodies absorb calcium. Some food products are fortified with vitamin D or you can take a supplement or good quality multivitamin.
- **Fat** absorbs fat-soluble vitamins, provides essential fatty acids and insulates and protects organs. Choose healthy fats such as olive oil, nuts, nut butters and avocado.
- **Fruits and vegetables** provide phytonutrients and antioxidants which has a protective effect on our body. Include all of the colors of the rainbow daily to get all of the nutrients you need. Aim for 2-3 servings of fresh fruit and at least a serving of vegetables at lunch and dinner. You can also snack on vegetables!

START EVERY MORNING WITH A BALANCED BREAKFAST

- Choose whole grains, lean proteins, fruits, vegetables and healthy fats.
- Examples include whole grain toast with peanut butter and banana slices; Greek yogurt with fruit and nuts; whole grain cereal with blueberries; whole wheat English muffin with egg and avocado; or a tropical green smoothie.

CHOOSE A HEALTHY LUNCH AT SCHOOL

- Half of your calories are consumed at school, so it is important to fuel your body with healthy foods!
- Plan ahead and pack a balanced lunch: roasted turkey and cheese sandwich with a tomato and lettuce, whole wheat pretzels and an apple
- If buying lunch, look at the menu ahead of time for the healthiest option. For example, tuna fish wrap with vegetables and a banana

HEALTHY SNACKS can provide the energy you need between meals. You are burning a lot of calories swimming that need to be replaced. You may require 2-3 snacks per day to support your activity levels. Refer to the snack handout.

FUEL YOUR TRAINING:

- Plan ahead! Consume a balanced snack or meal 1-4 hours prior to a practice or a meet.
- Choose complex carbohydrates and protein. A small amount of healthy fat is okay if there are several hours to digest. Limit as you get closer to start time.
- Larger meals should be consumed when there is time to digest, 3-4 hours prior to start time. Examples include: baked chicken with sweet potatoes and roasted vegetables; greek yogurt and banana slices; oatmeal with low-fat milk and blueberries; or an egg white omelet with a slice of wheat bread and peanut butter
- Smaller meals and snacks should be consumed when eaten closer to game time, 1 to 2 hours. For example, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich on wheat bread; rice cakes with peanut butter and banana slices; or a small bowl of cheerios with low-fat milk.

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- As your narrow timing down to 1 hour or less, focus should be on carbohydrates and hydration. For example, a banana and water.

AFTER GETTING OUT OF THE POOL, choosing the appropriate recovery foods and hydration will allow your body to replenish glycogen (stored energy) that was used up during swimming. A high protein snack will help the muscles rebuild and recover efficiently.

- **Consume a recovery drink or snack with protein and carbohydrates within 30 minutes of getting out of the pool. Examples include:**
 - Chocolate milk
 - Rice cakes and peanut butter
 - Protein bar
 - Banana and peanut butter
 - Premier or Orgain protein shake
 - Homemade smoothie
 - 20-24 ounces of water for each pound lost- you can also measure hydration status by the color of your urine and level of thirst.

If consuming a meal, here are some balanced examples:

- Baked salmon, sweet potato and sautéed spinach
- Whole wheat pasta with grilled chicken and broccoli
- Turkey chili topped with avocado, cheese and baked tortilla strips
- Brown rice topped with black beans, vegetables and fresh salsa
- Spinach salad topped with steak, hard-boiled egg and vegetables

GAME DAY SNACKS:

- **Choose snacks that are easy to digest and provide energy such as:**
 - Pretzels
 - Banana and peanut butter sandwiches
 - Fresh fruit
 - Homemade trail mix
 - Peanut butter crackers
 - Rice cakes with almond butter
 - Chocolate milk
 - Low-fat Greek yogurt
 - Low-fat cheese sticks

*****Avoid processed foods, fast foods, candy, baked goods and fried/greasy foods! They will slow you down and cause an upset stomach!**

HYDRATE! Water is one of the most important elements in your health. You need at least 8 glasses per day when you aren't swimming. Imagine how much you need on days you are swimming! Just because you don't feel yourself sweating in the pool doesn't mean you can't get dehydrated and cramp! Most athletes can hydrate with plain water and a varied diet. A sports drink may be necessary to replenish electrolytes during long meets or training and/or extreme heat. Gatorade and Powerade are the most popular but are loaded with sugar. There are other low-sugar options that provide you with the electrolytes you need and not all of the sugar you DO NOT need. If cramping does occur, you need

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to boost your water and electrolyte intake. Foods rich in potassium and magnesium can help such as bananas, nuts, beans and avocado. A good quality multivitamin may also be recommended. Stretching and adequate sleep can also help prevent cramping!

SLEEP, SLEEP AND SLEEP! The average kid your age requires 8-10 hours of sleep per night. Most teens are not getting enough sleep. If you are not sleeping well, you are at risk for:

- Poor performance in the classroom and poor test scores
- Cramping in the pool
- Difficulty waking in the morning
- Irritability in the afternoon
- Too much sleeping on the weekend
- Difficulty remembering or concentrating
- Poor food choices

TIPS FOR IMPROVING SLEEP HYGIENE:

- Make sure your bedroom is a restful sleep environment
- Create a reasonable bedtime and wake time, and make this consistent throughout the week
- Establish a bedtime routine such as taking a bath or performing a quiet activity
- Make sure your bedroom is dark and cool
- Move clocks out of sight
- Avoid caffeine- soda, tea, energy drinks chocolate, coffee
- Avoid large or spicy meals at bedtime
- Avoid ALL electronics at bedtime

MANAGE STRESS – We live in a very stressful environment. We often overlook the stress children and teens are under. Common stressors include: homework, tests, peer pressure, social life, sports and other activities. If you are under a lot of stress, it can have a negative impact on your sleep, mood, school performance, swimming performance and food choices.

TIPS TO MANAGE STRESS:

- Get at least 8 hours of sleep per night
- Let it out. Journal or talk
- Trying meditation, deep breathing, yoga, massage or acupuncture
- Read an inspirational book
- Create a positive mantra
- Find what works for you and stick with it

Now let's make some healthy smoothies! They are a great way to pack in a lot of nutrition in one glass!

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