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## RECOVERY SNACKS FOR SWIMMERS WITH FOOD ALLERGIES

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A mom recently contacted USA Swimming for help in planning recovery snacks for young swimmers with peanut, tree nut, milk and egg allergies. As she so rightly pointed out, we often tout the protein quality of eggs and milk, and suggest nuts as a healthful snack. So when those foods are off-limits, what can a young swimmer eat to get high-quality protein and healthful nutrients?

It is estimated that about 4% of children have food allergies, and the vast majority of food allergies are caused by peanuts, tree nuts (cashews, pistachios, almonds, walnuts, hazel nuts, macadamia nuts, Brazil nuts and pecans), milk, eggs, fish and shellfish. The common denominator in this list is protein, so here are the top tips for protein-rich recovery snacks for swimmer with food allergies.

It is important to stress that label-reading is critical in avoiding allergens. Food companies reformulate their products, and ingredients can change. So, these suggestions come with a warning that labels should be scrutinized and companies can be contacted to ensure no allergens are lurking in the food.

An allergy to peanuts (technically a legume) does not increase the chances of allergy to other legumes, such as soy beans, lentils or beans. Soy milk is great substitute for cow's milk and delivers the same amount of high quality protein with 8 grams per 8-ounce glass. Try flavored soy milk, like vanilla, chocolate or strawberry as a recovery beverage. Good recipes using soy milk can be found at <http://silk.com/recipes>. Silk is a leading brand of soy milk and is readily available in most grocery stores. Rice milk doesn't have as much protein as soy milk, but it can be an option when combined with other protein-rich foods.



Another protein-rich soy food is edamame. A half cup has 14 grams of protein and these tasty beans can be added to soups, salads, or eaten as a snack with a soy sauce dip. Hummus is made from chick peas and is easy to make at home for a quick snack.



To replace peanut butter, try sunflower seed butter or sesame seed butter (tahini) as a spread. Both have about the same amount of protein as peanut butter and are good as a spread or a dip for crackers or fruit.

There are a few energy bars that are free of allergens, but as mentioned previously, be sure to double check the labels. SoyJoy has 5 grams of protein per bar and comes in a variety of flavors, like dark chocolate cherry and blueberry. Many of the athletes I worked with like these bars warmed up in the microwave for a cake-like snack.

Of course, turkey, chicken, beef and pork are all high quality protein foods that make good recovery snacks. Just pack a cooler to keep foods safe for after practice. A chicken wrap, a roast beef sandwich, or turkey in a pita pocket are easy ways to deliver high quality protein for recovery.

A few resources that might prove helpful include:

<http://www.foodallergy.org/about>

<http://www.kidswithfoodallergies.org/recipes/allergy-friendly-recipes.php>



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