

Eating Tips for Teen Athletes

Ready, Set, GO! Many races are over in seconds. But when it comes to winning, it's not just the track time that counts. Rather, it is training that really improves athletic performance. And, what you eat is as important as how long and hard you practice. Good nutrition may be just the extra strategy you need to have a winning season.

GOOD NUTRITION IS A MATTER OF TEAMWORK

Active teens may find it hard to fit in all the foods they need to meet their nutrient requirements. One way is to eat more often. First, divide the day into six "Eating Zones." Then distribute the number of daily servings recommended by the Food Guide Pyramid among them. You do not have to eat certain foods at certain times to have a nutritious diet. Peanut butter on crackers and a glass of juice for breakfast or cereal with milk as a snack are both good choices.

EATING ZONE 1 should be within an hour of getting up in the morning. Eat something before leaving for school, or bring something to eat on the way. If you practice in the morning, eat something light first, then eat again after training.

A mid-day meal, **EATING ZONE 2**, is usually scheduled into your school day. If you can't buy the foods you want in the cafeteria or corner deli, bring your lunch with you.

EATING ZONE 3 is before afternoon games or practice sessions. Pack a non-perishable snack like crackers, a cereal bar, or an orange in your gym bag. Your



Snack Ideas for Teens

water bottle should be filled and ready to go, too.

EATING ZONE 4 might be after practice or games when you need to replenish your energy. Keep a high-carbohydrate snack in your locker or gym bag. (Hint: When you can't brush after meals and snacks, try chewing sugarless gum.)

For many teens, **EATING ZONE 5**, dinner, is the main meal of the day. You can make it the most nutritious, too. Include vegetables for essential vitamins, minerals, and carbohydrates. A good source of protein is important, but 3-5 ounces of cooked meat, poultry, or fish are enough for most athletes. (A three-ounce portion is about the size of an audiocassette.) Bread or other grain foods can fill up the plate. End the meal sweetly with fruit.

EATING ZONE 6, your evening snack, is the last chance to score nutrition points. Recall what you've eaten so far.

If you haven't had at least the minimum recommended number of servings from each food group (Grains, Vegetables, Fruit, Milk, Meat/Meat Alternate), now is the time to fill in some gaps. Snack from the groups you've missed. For example, a snack of lower-fat crackers with milk and a piece of fruit hits three food groups.

PERSONALIZE YOUR PROGRAM

Each sport requires different abilities and different training. Whatever sport you play, remember you are still growing and developing. You have special nutritional needs with or without the extra demands of athletics. Eating well will affect how you look and feel for the rest of your life.

KEEPING SCORE: CARBOHYDRATES WIN THE GOLD

Fatigue from lack of fuel defeats more athletes than any competitor. No matter how big your muscles or how fast their response, muscles have a limited capacity to store the fuel needed to power them. They must be refueled before, during, and after exercise.

Carbohydrates are the best muscle fuel. Foods high in carbohydrates include those found in the Bread, Vegetable, Fruit, and Milk Groups. Candy, confectionery, and soft drinks are additional sources of quick energy. Most teen athletes need about 55% to 60% of their calories from carbohydrates.

PROTEIN TAKES THE SILVER MEDAL

Protein is an important nutrient, and it is not a difficult requirement to satisfy. Meat-eating and vegetarian athletes alike can obtain ample protein by selecting a variety of foods from the

NUTRITION UPDATE

Food Guide Pyramid. Foods in the Meat and Milk Groups provide the best quality protein. (Hint: Eggs, nuts, and dry beans are also part of the meat group.) Additional sources of protein are found in the Bread and Vegetable Groups.

Protein is necessary to repair muscles and other tissues damaged during exertion and to build new ones during growth. Protein should provide about 15% of total calories. Given the high caloric intakes of athletes, this will more than meet individual protein requirements. Those who need to limit calories or who wish to calculate their protein requirements can base it on body weight. About 0.5-0.75 grams of protein per pound of body weight is recommended. Eating more than the suggested upper range of protein daily provides no benefit to athletes and may be hazardous to health.

FAT GETS THE BRONZE

The fat requirements of athletes differ little from those of the general population. Teen athletes should limit the fat content of their diets to no more than 30% of total calories, with less than 10% of calories from saturated fats. Regardless of your level of physical activity, high-fat diets can increase risk of heart disease and certain types of cancer.

FLUIDS DESERVE EXTRA-SPECIAL ATTENTION

A good diet is not built upon food alone. Water is an essential nutrient that must be consumed daily for health. While most athletes recognize the importance of drinking plenty of water, not all drink adequate amounts. Six to eight eight-ounce glasses of fluids a day are recommended. These can include water, fruit juices, sports drinks, and caffeine-free soft drinks. When it is hot and humid and the event or training

session is long, sports drinks are very helpful. One way to tell if you are getting enough fluids is to check the color of your urine. It will be almost clear if you are drinking enough fluid to replace your losses.

A WINNING GAME PLAN

Don't fall for special sports formulas that promise "ultimate" fitness in powders or pills. As all athletes know, success doesn't come easily. It is won by commitment to your goals. Make eating for success part of your game plan. Just take it one meal at a time, and make it your personal best.



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★ PIZZA PIE TRISCUIT ★

Top Reduced Fat TRISCUIT[®] Wafers with spaghetti sauce, shredded skim mozzarella cheese, and a sprinkling of oregano. Microwave 12 to 15 seconds or until cheese melts.

NUTRITION INFORMATION (based on 4 crackers, 1 tablespoon spaghetti sauce, 1 tablespoon shredded skim mozzarella cheese, and 1/8 teaspoon oregano): 106 calories, 4 g total fat, 1 g saturated fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 210 mg sodium.

★ CRUNCHY MUNCHY SNACK MIX ★

In a bowl, toss together 1 cup Reduced Fat WHEAT THINS[®] Snack Crackers, 1/2 cup PLANTERS[®] Reduced Fat Honey Roasted Peanuts, 1 cup fat-free mini pretzel twists, and 2 cups air-popped popcorn.

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NUTRITION INFORMATION per serving: (1/2 cup snack mix) 66 calories, 2 g total fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 127 mg sodium.

★ MUNCHIE CHEESE MADNESS ★

Top Reduced Fat RITZ[®] Crackers with apple slices and reduced fat shredded cheddar cheese. Microwave 12 to 15 seconds or until cheese melts.

NUTRITION INFORMATION (based on 5 crackers, 1 tablespoon reduced fat shredded cheddar cheese, and 1/4 small apple): 106 calories, 3 g total fat, 1 g saturated fat, 2 mg cholesterol, 191 mg sodium.

★ HAWAIIAN MUNCHIES ★

Combine fat-free cottage cheese and crushed pineapple. Serve as a dip with Reduced Fat WHEAT THINS[®] Snack Crackers.

NUTRITION INFORMATION (based on 2 tablespoons fat-free cottage cheese, 1 tablespoon crushed pineapple, and 9 crackers): 107 calories, 2 g total fat, 0 g saturated fat, 2 mg cholesterol, 320 mg sodium.

★ TRISCUIT NACHO ★

Top Reduced Fat TRISCUIT[®] Wafers with reduced fat shredded cheddar cheese and prepared salsa. Microwave 12 to 15 seconds or until cheese melts.

NUTRITION INFORMATION (based on 4 crackers, 1 tablespoon reduced fat shredded cheddar cheese, and 1 tablespoon salsa): 84 calories, 2 g total fat, 1 g saturated fat, 2 mg cholesterol, 167 mg sodium.

★ BANANA RITZ ★

Top Reduced Fat RITZ[®] Crackers with banana slices, a drizzle of honey, and a sprinkling of cinnamon.

NUTRITION INFORMATION (based on 5 crackers, 1/4 small banana, 1 teaspoon honey, and 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon): 113 calories, 3 g total fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 136 mg sodium.

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Top Reduced Fat RITZ® Crackers with apple slices and reduced fat shredded cheddar cheese. Microwave 12 to 15 seconds or until cheese melts.

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Top Reduced Fat RITZ® Crackers with banana slices, a drizzle of honey, and a sprinkling of cinnamon.

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