Client Name: Date:

RDN/NDTR: Email: Phone:

Nutrition Care for Team Sport Athletes

A nutrition plan supports better sports performance and recovery. Carbohydrates fuel working muscles, while protein helps muscles grow and supports tissue repair and healing. Fat supplies concentrated energy, essential fatty acids, vitamins and flavor. Drinking adequate fluids and replacing electrolytes helps prevent dehydration and heat-related illness.

Advice

- Eat 3 meals and 2-3 snacks daily, spaced every 3-4 hours, to supply the energy your sport requires. Avoid skipping meals.
  - The "Meal and Snack Ideas: Moderate or Hard Training and Game Days" table in this handout shows how to schedule meals and snacks around sports activity.
- Build meals with a whole-grain carbohydrate, lean protein, healthy fat, and a range of fruits and/or vegetables.
  - Whole grains, fresh fruit and vegetables supply antioxidants, phytochemicals and fiber that support a strong immune system and healthy digestion.
- For 1 hour of moderate daily activity, eat 5 to 7 grams of carbohydrate per kilogram of body weight each day.
  - Harder training days with 1 to 3 hours of activity may require 8 to 10 grams of carbohydrate per kilogram of body weight. Examples include two-a-day sessions, tournaments and off-season conditioning.
- Eat 1.2 to 2.0 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight each day.
- Select heart-healthy fats, including avocado, oils, nuts and similar foods.
- Drink water throughout the day and use sports drinks during activity. Check urine color to help monitor hydration: pale yellow is the ideal shade.
- Before and after games, choose low-fat meals with a variety of carbohydrates and proteins.
- Within 30 minutes after training, have a snack or drink rich in carbohydrate and protein.
- After training or competition, eat sodium-rich foods to replace sodium lost through sweat.
- Reduce saturated fats, including fried foods, and limit alcohol. These foods and drinks can affect recovery and, in turn, your performance.

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Nutrition Therapy for Team Sports Athletes (2024)

Foods to Favor or Limit

Food Group	Foods to Favor	Foods to Limit
Grains	▸ Whole-grain bread, bagels, tortillas, cereals, oats, granola, grits, crackers, pasta, brown rice and quinoa	▸ Highly processed snacks and sweets, including cakes, cookies and pies ▸ Packaged sweet snacks and baked goods, including cakes, cookies, pies, doughnuts and pastries
Protein Foods	▸ Lean meat cuts: beef, pork or venison ▸ Skinless turkey and chicken ▸ Fish and seafood: fresh, frozen or canned ▸ Lean-meat cold cuts, including turkey breast and extra-lean ham ▸ Nut butters and nuts ▸ Seed butters and seeds ▸ Whole eggs, egg whites and egg substitutes ▸ Lentils, beans and peas ▸ Plant-based protein foods, including tofu and other meat alternatives	▸ Fried or fatty meats, including ribs, T-bone steak and hamburger ▸ Skin-on chicken or turkey, dark meat, or fried poultry ▸ Fried fish or seafood, or creamy sauces ▸ Nut butters containing added sugars or hydrogenated fats and oils ▸ Fatty lunch meats and cold cuts, including salami and bologna ▸ Hot dogs, sausage and bacon
Dairy and Dairy Alternatives	▸ Milk, yogurt, Greek yogurt, cottage cheese and cheese; use the fat level advised by your sports registered dietitian nutritionist ▸ Calcium-fortified plant milks, including almond, rice, oat and soy	▸ Ice cream, cream and half-and-half
Vegetables	▸ Vegetables: fresh, frozen or canned. Favor whole vegetables over vegetable juices	▸ Cream sauces and fried vegetables
Fruit	▸ Fruit: fresh, frozen or dried ▸ Fruit canned in 100% fruit juice ▸ Favor whole fruit more often than fruit juices	▸ Fruit containing added sugars
Fats and Oils	▸ Unsaturated plant oils, such as olive, peanut, avocado and canola ▸ Margarines and spreads made from vegetable oils	▸ Butter, stick margarine, coconut oil and palm oil ▸ Cream-based spreads and sauces ▸ Hydrogenated oils

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Meal and Snack Ideas: Moderate or Hard Training and Game Days

Portion sizes for meals and snacks depend on your calorie needs, your sport, and how soon you will play. Your sports registered dietitian nutritionist can tailor this meal plan to your needs.

Meal	Food Ideas
Breakfast	Choose a filling, balanced breakfast. Breakfast ideas include: ■ Tofu or eggs, prepared any way ■ Whole-grain toast, bagels, tortillas, oatmeal, grits or another grain ■ Fresh or dried fruit, or 100% fruit juice ■ Any variety of milk, yogurt or cheese ■ Toppings: nut butters, plant oils, avocado or ketchup
Morning snack	Use snacks to increase carbohydrate intake. Snack ideas include: ■ Whole-grain peanut butter and jelly/jam sandwich with milk ■ Berries and granola with yogurt ■ Whole-grain crackers with cheese ■ Milk and a granola bar ■ Sports drink or water
Lunch	Choose energy-supplying lunch foods that sit well with you. Lunch ideas include: ■ Lean protein: chicken breast, roast beef, tofu, legumes, chicken/turkey/ham deli meats, or tuna ■ Baked potato, sweet potato, rice, pasta, whole-grain bread or quinoa ■ Green beans, carrots, broccoli, another favorite vegetable or a side salad ■ 100% juice or fruit ■ Water, milk or a sports drink
Snack 30 minutes before training or a game	Before the game, choose carbohydrate foods or drinks that digest quickly and easily. Pre-game snack ideas include: ■ Granola bar or a whole-grain and fruit bar ■ Fruit cups or bananas ■ Graham or salted crackers, or pretzels ■ Energy gels containing carbohydrate ■ Sports drink or water
Snacks and fluids during training or a game	During the game, choose carbohydrate foods or drinks. Options for fueling while you play include: ■ Water or a sports drink: 5-10 ounces every 15-20 minutes during the game and halftime. To prevent dehydration, drink enough to keep exercise-related weight loss from fluid below 2% of body weight. ■ Take in 30 to 60 grams of carbohydrate for each 1 hour of exercise ■ At halftime: granola bars, crackers, pretzels, fruit (bananas, fruit cups, squeezable applesauce), carbohydrate energy gels, fruit snacks or sports gummies

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Meal	Food Ideas
Snacks after training or a game (within 30 minutes)	Start recovery after a game with a snack high in carbohydrate and protein. Aim for 1.0-1.2 grams of carbohydrate per kilogram of body weight plus 15-30 grams of protein. Postgame snack ideas include: ■ Chocolate milk, a protein shake containing carbohydrate, or a smoothie with added protein powder or Greek yogurt ■ Milk with a peanut butter and jelly sandwich ■ Sliced vegetables and hummus with pretzels/pita chips ■ Milk with cereal ■ Nuts and fresh fruit ■ A granola, fruit and nut bar ■ Granola with yogurt
Dinner	At dinner, include recovery foods that repair muscles and replenish glycogen. Dinner ideas include: **Option 1:** ■ Make a bowl: a lean protein such as fish, chicken or tofu; brown rice or whole-grain pasta; leafy greens; beans or legumes; sauteed bell peppers; avocado; and salsa ■ A fruit cup or fruit ■ Water, milk, 100% juice or a sports drink **Option 2:** ■ A sandwich, 6-12-inch sub or tortilla with your choice of turkey, roast beef, ham, tuna, cheese or a vegetable patty, plus lettuce, tomato, avocado and condiments ■ Salted potato or corn chips, pretzels or popcorn ■ A fruit cup or fruit ■ Water, milk, 100% juice or a sports drink
Bedtime snacks	A bedtime snack can help meet daily calorie needs, improve hydration, restore energy and supply nutrients for repair and healing. Bedtime snack ideas include: ■ Plain or chocolate milk ■ Milk with cereal ■ Fruit with yogurt ■ Crackers with hummus or lean deli meats ■ Peanut butter with a banana or apple ■ A protein-containing smoothie

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Example Meal Plan

Complete this form to design your personal meal plan.

Meal	Menu
Breakfast	
Snack	
Lunch	
Snack	
Dinner	
Snack	

Notes:

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