

Sports Nutrition: Are You Getting the Right Stuff?

Eating a variety of foods is the best way to ensure that you get the nutrients essential for good health and physical performance. Be sure to include food from the following groups in your diet every day.

Food Groups

Serving Size

3-4 servings from the milk group

1 cup skim milk, 1 cup yogurt, 1 oz. cheese

5 servings from the fruit and vegetable group

1/2 cup canned fruit or vegetables, 1 cup fresh vegetables, 1 medium-size piece fresh fruit

8-11 servings from the bread/starch group

1/2 cup rice/pasta, 3/4 cup cereal, slice of bread

6 oz. from the meat group

3 oz. is about the size of a deck of cards

Most athletes should receive 15 percent of their calories from protein, 25-30 percent from fat, and 55 percent from carbohydrates (mostly complex carbohydrates such as pastas, breads, rice, beans and cereals).

Following these other simple guidelines also can help ensure good health.

Maintain a Healthy Weight

Being overweight or underweight can impact your strength and performance. To lose or gain weight, reduce or increase your calorie intake by 500 calories per day. A change of about 3,500 calories in one week equals one pound. One to two pounds each week is a safe weight change. For specific guidelines, see your doctor or a registered dietitian.

Choose Good Sources of Protein

Choose nutrient-dense foods such as lean meats, low-fat milk, yogurt and cheeses, egg whites and grain/legume/dairy combinations. Remember, chips, sweets and soda provide calories without much nutrition.

Replace Fluids and Electrolytes

Drinking water is very important for athletes because it helps to maintain body temperature and prevent

dehydration, cramps, exhaustion and even heat stroke. Avoid beverages containing caffeine, which can cause dehydration. To help replace electrolytes lost from sweating, eat foods such as bananas, oranges, grapefruit and low-fat dairy products after an event.

Rather than waiting until you feel thirsty, drink two cups of water or a sports beverage two hours before athletic activity; two cups 15 minutes before the activity; and 1/2 cup every 15 minutes during an activity.

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This information is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care providers. If you have any questions, talk with your doctor or others on your health care team.

If you are a Gillette patient with urgent questions or concerns, please contact Telehealth Nursing at [651-229-3890](#).