

# Nutrition for Athletes

## What diet is best for athletes?

- ✓ All athletes need a diet that provides enough calories. Calories give our body energy. Eat a variety of foods every day like whole grains, vegetables, fruits, beans, lean meats, and low fat milk products.



## Hydration is Key!

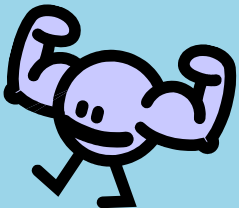
- ✓ Fluids are very important. Becoming dehydrated can stop any athlete from playing his or her best.
- ✓ To stay hydrated, athletes need 8-16oz of water a couple of hours before a game, 4-8oz every 15-20 minutes during a game, and another 8-16oz of water a few hours after the game.

## Are carbohydrates

## important for athletes?

- ✓ YES! Carbohydrates provide the body with fuel.
- ✓ Carbohydrates are found in every food group! Fruits, vegetables, milk, grains, and even some meats and beans have carbohydrates.
- ✓ Carbohydrates can be stored in the liver and muscles and used for energy when we exercise.
- ✓ Most exercises do not use up all of the carbohydrate stores in our body, so eating carbohydrates during exercise usually is not needed.
- ✓ If exercise is hard and lasts for longer than 60 minutes, carbohydrates in the form of a sports drink are helpful for fuel.

## Do athletes need extra protein to build muscles?



- ✓ No! A balanced diet that includes 5-10oz of lean protein from the meats and beans group, and low fat dairy products will supply all of the protein that muscles need.
- ✓ 2 ounces of peanut butter is the size of a ping pong ball.
- 2 ounces of cooked beans is the size of your fist.
- 1 whole egg is 1 ounce.
- 1 ounce of nuts is 1 handful.
- 3 ounces of meat or fish is the size of a computer mouse.



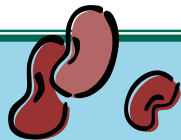


# Carbohydrates and Energy Performance



## What are complex carbohydrates?

- ✓ Complex carbohydrates have vitamins, minerals, and fiber that are needed for good health and performance. Whole grains and beans are great sources of complex carbohydrates!
- ✓ Complex carbohydrates give us energy that is long lasting.



## What are simple carbohydrates?

- ✓ Healthy simple carbohydrates are found in fruits and low-fat milk products.
- ✓ Less healthy simple carbohydrates include sugars and refined starches found in candy, soda, and white flour.
- ✓ Healthy simple carbohydrates give us energy right away.



## What should athletes eat before, during, and after exercise?

- ✓ **BEFORE:** 2-4 hours before exercise, eat complex carbohydrates and protein for longer lasting energy. Try a turkey sandwich on whole wheat bread! 15 minutes-2 hours before exercise eat a light snack with healthy, simple carbohydrates like an apple, string cheese, or cereal and milk for fast acting energy. Make sure to drink 8-16 ounces of water 1-2 hours before exercise to prevent dehydration.
- ✓ **DURING:** If exercise is hard and continuous for longer than 1 hour, sports drinks are beneficial to provide fuel for the muscles. Drink 4-8 ounces of water or sports drink every 15-20 minutes during exercise to stay hydrated.
- ✓ **AFTER:** After hard and continuous exercise, it is important to eat a nutritious well balanced meal with vegetables, protein, and carbohydrate-rich foods. Be sure to drink 8-16 ounces of water 1-2 hours after exercise to prevent dehydration. Low fat milk is a great option too!

