



NUTRITION FOR THE TEENAGE TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE

Food is Fuel	Fluids & Supplements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on your age and the age you started competitive sports, the amount and type of food you eat may influence your growth and development as well as your success • An elite athlete's training may include one or two sessions per day of high-intensity workouts plus cross training &/or weight training • It is very important for you to eat enough calories. If you don't eat enough calories, this can slow your growth and development and increase your risk of injury. Females who don't eat enough may have menstrual irregularities or stress fractures • Your calorie needs will change when you gain or lose weight. A sports dietitian can help you figure out if you need to change the amount you eat to fit your training and competition schedule, especially when your weight is changing or you are growing. • Many teenage athletes like runners and soccer players need 3-5 grams of carbohydrate per pound of weight per day. Good sources of carbs are whole grain breads/cereals, dairy foods, fruits and vegetables. • Growing teen track athletes need .6-.9 grams of protein per pound of body weight per day. Good sources of protein are fish, chicken, turkey, lean beef/pork, beans, non-fat or low fat milk, yogurt, cheese and soy foods. • Teenage athletes need .4-.5 grams of fat per pound of body weight per day. Choose heart-healthy fats such as olive oil, canola oil, nuts, avocado. Many athletes eat very low-fat diets because they are worried about gaining weight. Recent research shows that athletes can improve performance with a healthful fat intake, as long as they eat adequate carbohydrates and total calories. • Limiting consumption of highly sugared beverages and snacks such as soda, energy drinks, candy and even some "sport snacks" can be important to ensure peak performance. The same is true with high fat foods such as burgers and fries, theatre popcorn, and candy bars. Eating these foods very infrequently will help ensure your best athletic performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many athletes typically drink about 1-1.5 quarts (4-6 c) of fluid per day. However, this is not enough fluids to stay hydrated. • Dehydration can strain your heart and lungs, make you less coordinated, lead to poor performance, and increase your chances of injury. • Be sure to drink often during long practices • Two to three hours before practice or competition, drink 2-3 cups of fluid • Drink during exercise if total duration is more than 30 minutes and in excessive heat • At the end of practice or competition, drink enough to replace the fluids that your body lost during the workout (weigh before & after) • One way to know if you are hydrated is to look at your urine color. Straw color means you are not getting enough fluids • If you train at high altitude, you will need more fluids. • Engineered sport foods are not necessary to enhance performance • Energy bars, gels, sport candies, etc may have a place in training, two-game days, and competition >60 minutes in duration but should not replace eating real foods. • Don't use weight loss supplements. They may cause dehydration, increase heart rate & blood pressure. <p>NUTRITION TIPS FOR IMPROVING TRACK & FIELD PERFORMANCE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make nutrition and hydration a top priority. Good nutrition can keep you strong, prevent injuries and improve overall physical and emotional athletic performance on the track. 2. Get help from a registered dietitian if you want to lose or gain weight or if you need help reviewing your meal plan. Skipping meals, avoiding or significantly increasing fat, and fad meal plans can all wreck your health and hinder your competitive edge. 3. Eat often and consume a variety of foods. Keep your meals and snacks colorful, fresh and local whenever possible.