

# NUTRITION IDEAS FOR WRESTLERS

## ***EATING HEALTHY EVERY DAY***

Due to concerns about weight control, some wrestlers choose to skip meals or excessively restrict their daily food intake. Those practices can be detrimental to their health, as well as academic and athletic performance. **In order to maintain the high energy levels needed for their intense workouts, wrestlers need to eat a healthy, balanced diet on a daily basis.** If wrestlers make food choices that are high in carbohydrate, low in fat, with moderate amounts of protein, they will be able to eat a healthy, balanced diet without the need to be overly concerned about weight.

Carbohydrates can be in the form of “complex” carbohydrates or “simple” carbohydrates. **Complex carbohydrates are found in breads, grains, and cereals. Simple carbohydrates come from foods containing refined sugar such as pop and candy, and from foods containing natural sugars such as fruit. Getting sugar from natural sources, such as fruit, is preferable to candy and pop because it will satisfy one’s sweet tooth while providing the body with nutrients and fluid at the same time.** Energy from carbohydrates is converted into glucose. Glucose provides immediate, short-term energy. Unused glucose is converted into glycogen and stored in the muscles or liver, or converted to fat and stored as fat tissue. A variety of high carbohydrate foods must be eaten every day to ensure one is getting a variety nutrients necessary for peak performance.

Wrestlers should understand **it is impossible and undesirable to eliminate all fat from one’s diet.** While excessive fat is unneeded and contributes greatly to weight gain or the difficulty in losing weight, **fat is needed for many of the body’s processes which are essential to athletes.** Fat content in foods can occur because of naturally occurring fat or fat that is added. By eliminating excess fat, but not eliminating all foods containing fat, a wrestler can maintain or lose weight while still being healthy.

The following practical ideas for high carbohydrate, low-fat, moderate protein foods are provided to assist wrestlers, their parents and coaches in choosing appropriate foods.

### ***BREAKFAST IDEAS***

***Drink at least one 6-ounce glass of your favorite juice***

***Drink at least one 8-ounce glass of water***

Bagel, English muffin, or whole-wheat toast spread with peanut butter and topped with a sliced banana, or jam

Bowl of cold or hot cereal with low-fat milk, topped with fresh fruit

English muffin, or whole-wheat toast spread with jam

French toast, pancakes, or waffles topped with low-fat yogurt, applesauce, syrup, or jam

Fresh or canned fruit  
Homemade milkshakes made with low-fat milk, low-fat yogurt, and fruit  
Leftover vegetable pizza  
Poached egg  
Stir cold breakfast cereal into low-fat yogurt

### LUNCH IDEAS

***Drink at least one 8-ounce glass of water***

***Drink at least one 8-ounce glass of low-fat milk***

Whole-wheat or pita bread with turkey, chicken, lean roast beef, or lean ham, and Swiss cheese, and vegetables. (Tomatoes, green peppers, lettuce, cucumbers, onions, and sprouts are all great!)

Tuna or chicken salad sandwich with low-fat mayonnaise.

Baked potato topped with low-fat sour cream, mozzarella cheese, salsa, or skim milk

Vegetable pizza

English muffin topped with pizza sauce and melted cheese

Chicken noodle soup

Fresh fruit

Graham crackers

Vanilla wafer

Pudding made with low-fat milk

Low-fat yogurt

*Always include at least one serving of vegetables and fruit with lunch*

### DINNER IDEAS

***Drink at least one, 8-ounce glass of water***

***Drink at least one, 8-ounce glass of low-fat milk***

Baked potato with low-fat topping

Baked turkey, white meat without skin

Bread, muffins, or rolls

Broiled chicken, white meat without skin

Brown or white rice

Cooked vegetables

Fruit

Instant pudding made with low-fat milk

Lean beef or pork

Oriental stir fries with rice

Pasta with tomato sauce or low-fat meat sauce

Tortillas with low-fat refried beans and salsa

Tuna-noodle casserole made with water packed tuna

## SNACK IDEAS

**Drink at least 1 8-ounce glass of water with your snack.**

|  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Air popped popcorn                                 | Low-fat yogurt                   |
| Animal crackers                                    | Low-fat pudding cups             |
| Bagels   | Low-fat fruit bars               |
| Baked snack crackers and cheese                    | Oatmeal cookies                  |
| Blueberry muffins                                  | Peanut butter and jelly sandwich |
| Chicken or turkey sandwich with low-fat mayonnaise | Pretzels                         |
| Fresh fruit  | Pudding pops                     |
| Fruit Newtons                                      | String cheese                    |
| Fruit bread  | Vanilla wafers                   |
| Fruit bars   | Vegetables and dip               |
| Ice milk or frozen yogurt                          |                                  |

## HELPFUL FOOD & CALORIE SUGGESTIONS

**Meats:** The following meats are low in fat and have approximately **120-150 calories, per 3 ounce serving.**

Fish  
Lean roast beef  
Lean ham  
Lean ground beef - (Rinse ground beef to reduce the fat content)  
Skinless, white chicken  
Skinless, white turkey  
Water-packed tuna

*When cooking meat, it should be broiled, baked, or grilled to keep the fat content to a minimum. Choosing leaner cuts of meat will help in keeping the fat content low.*

**Breads:** The following breads have approximately **50-100 calories per serving.**

|                            |                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 biscuit                  | 5 saltine cracker squares |
| 1 slice bread              | 1-6" corn tortilla        |
| ½ English muffin           | 1-4" pancake              |
| ½ hamburger or hot dog bun | 1-4" waffle               |
| 1 dinner roll              |                           |

**Adding butter, mayonnaise, or margarine greatly increases the calorie content.**  
Honey, jam, or low-fat peanut butter are a better choice.

*Calorie content of various spreads:*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Butter (hard) - 34 calories per teaspoon    | Margarine - 34 calories per teaspoon     |
| Butter (whipped) - 27 calories per teaspoon | Mayonnaise - 33 calories per teaspoon    |
| Catsup - 10 calories per teaspoon           | Mustard - 4 calories per teaspoon        |
| Honey - 21 calories per teaspoon            | Peanut butter - 31 calories per teaspoon |
| Jelly/jam - 17 calories per teaspoon        |  |

**Fruits and vegetables** vary greatly in calories, but they are all **low in calories compared to most other foods**. They are also fat free, with the exception of avocados, unless they are topped with margarine, butter, or high calorie dressings. They are very high in nutrients.

HEALTHY CHOICES WHEN EATING OUT:

Baked potato with low-fat toppings  
Bean or chicken burrito  
Cheese or vegetable pizza  
Chicken sandwich, with low-fat mayonnaise, barbecue sauce, or honey mustard  
Chili  
Roast beef sandwich  
Side salad with low-fat dressing  
Skim Milk  
(Refer to the fast food handout for additional ideas.)

BEST FOOD CHOICES FROM CONVENIENCE STORES:

|                                      |                        |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Animal crackers                      | Low-fat chocolate milk |
| Fruit                                | Low-fat bean burrito   |
| Fruit bars (ie. Fig bars)            | Nutri Grain bars       |
| Granola bar ( not chocolate covered) | Pretzels               |
| Juice boxes                          | String cheese          |
| Low-fat yogurt                       | V-8 juice              |

*Sources:* Berning, Jackie & Coleman, Ellen, Professional Presentations, various dates; Diet, Exercise, & Fitness, Coleman, Ellen, MA, MPH, RD, 1990; Food Power, National Dairy Council, 1991; Health and Safety Considerations for Interscholastic Wrestling, Ohio High School Athletic Association & Ohio Wrestling Coaches Association, 1994; Nutrition Education Instructional Materials, Michigan Weight Monitoring Program, 1996; Nutrition and Sport Success, United States Olympic Committee & Swanson Center for Nutrition, Inc., 1990; Pinning Down Your Optimal Weight: A wrestler's Guide to Good Nutrition, Ricci, Marilyn, MS, RD, 1991; The Wrestler's Diet: A Guide to Healthy Weight Control, Landry, Roger, Oppliger, Robert, Shelter, Ann, & Landry, Greg, 1991.

*Special thanks to Molly Pelzer, RD, LD from Dairy Council for providing ideas and reviewing this material.*

**LOW-FAT MENU IDEAS FOR WRESTLERS** (Serving sizes indicate one serving from that food group)

|                       | <b><u>Milk</u></b>   | <b><u>Meat</u></b>   | <b><u>Vegetable</u></b>   | <b><u>Fruit</u></b>   | <b><u>Grain</u></b>   |
|-----------------------|--|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Breakfast</b>      | Choose 1<br>8 oz. low-fat milk<br>1 slice Swiss/Amer. cheese<br>8 oz. Low-fat choc. milk<br>Leftover cheese pizza<br>8 oz. low-fat milkshake<br>8 oz. low-fat yogurt<br>8 oz, blended milk/fruit beverage (equals 1 milk + 1 fruit)<br>1 oz. Swiss, cheddar, Monterey Jack, Colby cheese | Choose 0-1<br>4 oz. peanut butter<br>Poached egg   | Choose 0-1<br>6 oz. tomato juice<br>6 oz. V-8 juice   | Choose 1<br>6 oz. fruit juice<br>1 cup raw fruit<br>1 piece fruit<br>½ cup canned fruit   | Choose 2-4<br>1 bowl cold cereal<br>½ Bagel<br>½ English muffin<br>4" Pancake<br>4" Waffle<br>1 slice whole wheat toast<br>1 slice cheese pizza<br>½ cup hot cereal   |
| <b>Lunch</b>          | Choose 1<br>8 oz. low-fat yogurt<br>8 oz. low-fat milk<br>1 slice Swiss/Amer. cheese<br>8 oz. low-fat choc. milk<br>½ cup ice milk<br>1 oz. Swiss, cheddar, Monterey Jack, Colby cheese  | Choose 1<br>3 oz. water packed tuna<br>3 oz. roast pork<br>3 oz. Lean roast beef<br>3 oz. lean ham<br>3 oz. chicken or turkey (skinless)<br>3 oz. broiled/baked fish | Choose 1-2<br>½ cup canned veg.<br>1 cup raw veggies<br>1 med. baked potato<br>½ cup mashed potato<br>6 baby carrots<br>Spaghetti sauce | Choose 1<br>6 oz. fruit juice<br>1 piece fruit<br>1 cup raw fruit<br>½ cup canned fruit   | Choose 2-4<br>1 slice bread<br>pita bread<br>½ hot dog or hamburger bun<br>1 dinner roll<br>5 saltine crackers<br>1 - 6" flour tortilla<br>½ cup pasta  |
| <b>Snack</b>          | Choose 1<br>Yogurt<br>8 oz. low-fat milk<br>1 slice Swiss/Amer. Cheese<br>8 oz. low-fat choc. milk<br>½ cup ice milk<br>1 oz. Swiss, cheddar, Monterey Jack, Colby cheese  | Choose 1<br>4 oz. peanut butter<br>3 oz. lean ham<br>3 oz. chicken or turkey (skinless)<br>3 oz. water packed tuna   | Choose 1<br>6 oz. tomato juice<br>6 oz. V-8 juice<br>6 baby carrots<br>1 baked potato   | Choose 0-1<br>6 oz. fruit juice<br>1 piece fruit<br>1 cup raw fruit<br>½ cup canned fruit | Choose 2-4<br>½ English muffin<br>½ bagel<br>1 slice whole wheat toast<br>5 saltine crackers<br>1 - 6" tortilla<br>1 bowl cold cereal   |
| <b>Supper</b>         | Choose 1<br>8 oz. low-fat yogurt<br>8 oz. low-fat milk<br>1 slice Swiss/Amer. cheese<br>8 oz. low-fat choc. milk<br>½ cup ice milk<br>1 oz. Swiss, cheddar, Monterey Jack, Colby cheese  | Choose 1<br>3 oz. water packed tuna<br>3 oz. Lean roast beef<br>3 oz. lean ham<br>3 oz. chicken or turkey (skinless)<br>3 oz. broiled/baked fish<br>3 oz. roast pork | Choose 1-2<br>½ cup canned veg.<br>1 cup raw veggies<br>1 med. baked potato<br>½ cup mashed potato<br>6 baby carrots<br>Spaghetti sauce | Choose 0-1<br>6 oz. fruit juice<br>1 piece fruit<br>1 cup raw fruit<br>½ cup canned fruit | Choose 2-4<br>1 slice bread/pita bread<br>1 - 6" flour tortilla<br>½ hot dog/hamburger bun<br>5 saltine crackers<br>1 dinner roll<br>3 slices veggie pizza (equals 1 milk, 1 veggie, 3 grains)<br>½ cup pasta |
| <b>TOTAL SERVINGS</b> | <b>4</b>   | <b>3+</b>  | <b>3-6</b>  | <b>2-4</b>  | <b>8-16</b>   |

**NOTE:** To maintain hydration drink at least one, 8-ounce glass of water with each meal and snack.

# NUTRITION IDEAS FOR WRESTLERS

## ***PRE-COMPETITION MEALS***

Wrestlers may not often think about pre-competition meals because of early morning weigh-ins. After they have “made weight,” they often eat anything that is available and worry about the consequences later! By following these guidelines and those in “*EATING HEALTHY EVERY DAY*” wrestlers will find it easier to fuel their performance and control their weight.

*Here are some **basic guidelines for eating before competition.***

**Avoid foods high in salt** as they cause water to leave the muscles where it is needed it to aid performance.

**Drink at least two, 8-ounce glasses of water** with your meal.

**Eat 3 - 4 hours before competing.**

Eat familiar foods that will not cause indigestion.

Eat foods that are high in carbohydrate and low in fat and protein.

**Keep the pre-competition meal small.**

*Food ideas for after weigh-in:*

***Drink at least one 8-ounce glass of water***

Bagels, English muffins, or toast topped with peanut butter and jelly or fruit

Cold or hot cereal with low-fat milk

Fresh fruit

Fruit juice

Low-fat yogurt

Pancakes topped with fruit

Waffles topped with fruit & low-fat whipped topping

*Ideas for pre-competition meals:*

***Drink at least one 8-ounce glass of water***

Baked potato topped with salsa or other low-fat topping

Bread, muffins, rolls topped with honey, jam or other low-fat topping

Broiled fish

Cooked vegetables

Fresh or canned fruit

Fruit juice, unsweetened

Lettuce salad with low-fat dressing

Low-fat milk

Pasta without meat sauce

Rice, white or brown

Skinless, white chicken or turkey

*Any breakfast ideas are also excellent choices for pre-game.*

## **POST-COMPETITION MEALS**

It normally takes your body 24 - 72 hours (1-3 days) to convert complex carbohydrates into useable forms of energy. ***Eating a high carbohydrate meal 15-30 minutes after exercise, and definitely within 1 hour after exercise, can reduce the amount of time needed to convert carbohydrates into useable glycogen to as little as 12 hours (½ day).***

*Foods and drinks to consider as post-competition, or post-practice, snacks are:*

Bananas  
Fresh fruit  
Fruit juices  
Oranges  
Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches  
Sports drinks  
Carnation Instant Breakfast

If an athlete chooses to drink only fluids immediately after exercise, a high carbohydrate sports drink, may be the best choice. These drinks are not high protein “weight gainers,” but high carbohydrate supplements. A high carbohydrate meal should be consumed within two hours of competition.

**Following competition, avoid foods high in fat and sodium** as both will cause weight gain over the next few days due to water retention.

*Sources:* Berning, Jackie & Coleman, Ellen, Professional Presentations, various dates; The PreCompetition Meal, U.S. Olympic Committee Sports Medicine Division, 1993; “Meals and the Timing of Competition,” Stamford, Bryant, The Physician and Sports Medicine, date unknown; Nutrition Education Instructional Materials, Michigan Weight Monitoring Program, 1996.

*Special thanks to Molly Pelzer, RD, LD from Dairy Council for providing ideas and reviewing this material.*

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# NUTRITION IDEAS FOR WRESTLERS

## *THE "BEST" BEVERAGES*

**Every day our body loses about 10, 8-ounce cups of water** through normal body functions. These ten cups do not include what we lose through sweat during exercise! To maintain optimal performance, it is essential to replace the water that is lost.

The advantages and disadvantages of replacing fluids by drinking various beverages are listed below. The beverages are also ranked in order of preference, with **water being the beverage of choice**. With the exception of water, beverages consumed should contain nutrients (vitamins and minerals) the body needs for performance.

Beverages consumed within an hour prior to exercise, or during exercise, should not contain more than a small amount of sugar and should always be caffeine-free.

### WATER

The most essential nutrient for athletes.  
Is necessary to release energy from other nutrients.  
Should always be readily available.  
Sugar and fat free.

### SPORTS DRINKS - *should contain no more than 70 calories per 8-ounce serving*

Designed for events lasting more than one hour in duration.  
Electrolytes from sports drinks may be needed during times of excessive fluid loss or during two-a-day practices.  
May cause more fluid to stay in the muscles during exercise.  
Most contain the optimal amount of sugar for use during exercise, no dilution necessary.  
Taste may cause people to drink more than they would with plain water.

### UNSWEETENED FRUIT JUICE

Apple, orange, and cranberry juices are highest in sugar and should be avoided within one hour of exercise.  
Provides many nutrients.  
Sugar content should be diluted if used within one hour prior to exercise, or during exercise.

### MILK

Good source of carbohydrates, calcium, and other nutrients.  
Great beverage for pre-competition meal, 3 - 4 hours prior to competition.  
Milk does not cause cotton mouth.



## POP

**Carbonation may cause stomach upset** in some athletes.

Contains no nutrients.

Even diet, caffeine-free pop has many added substances that need to be digested which may slow the rate of fluid absorption by the body.

May contain caffeine which increases urine loss & risk of dehydration.

Regular pop contains high amounts of sugar.

**NOTE: An athlete should drink *at least 10, eight ounce cups of these beverages each day!***

*Sources:* Berning, Jackie, Sports Nutritionist. Castle Rock, Colorado; Clark, Nancy, M.S., R.D. The Athlete's Kitchen, New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1986; Coleman, Ellen, R.D., M.A., M.P.H. Program Director: Riverside Cardiac Fitness Center, Riverside, California; Coleman, Ellen. "Sports Drink Update," Sports Science Exchange, Volume 1, Number 5, 1988; Food Power, National Dairy Council, Inc., 1991; Journal of The American Dietetic Association, Volume 86, Number 8, August, 1986; Nutrition Education Instructional Materials, Michigan Weight Monitoring Program, 1996; Shockey, Gayle, L., M.P.H., R.D. "Hydration and Health: Meeting Athletes' Fluids Needs," Sportscare and Fitness, July/August, 1988; "Sports Drinks: Adjusting for the Flavor Factor," The First Aider, Summer, 1991; Tribble, Evelyn. "An Update on Sports Drinks," American Coach, July/August, 1988.

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# NUTRITION IDEAS FOR WRESTLERS

## *ALL-DAY TOURNAMENT NUTRITION*

**During all-day tournaments it is important to stay energized throughout the entire day without feeling “weighted down.” That necessitates athletes “grazing” throughout the day by eating, and drinking, small amounts frequently. It is extremely important for athletes to drink an adequate amount of fluids during a tournament.** Energy and fluid needs can be met by drinking juices and sports drinks. Energy needs can also be met by eating easily digested foods that are also high in complex carbohydrates.

### Time period between events:

### Best foods to eat:

1 hour, or less

Water or sports drinks containing no more than 70 calories per 8 ounce serving.

1 - 2 hours

Water, sports drinks, unsweetened fruit juices, vegetable juice, fruit such as apples, oranges, watermelon, or grapes.

2 - 3 hours

Water, sports drinks, unsweetened fruit juices, vegetable juice, fruit such as apples, oranges, watermelon, or grapes, bagel, whole-wheat bread with jam, muffin.

3 - 4 hours

Water, sports drinks, unsweetened fruit juices, vegetable juice, fruit such as apples, oranges, watermelon, or grapes, bagel, whole-wheat bread with jam, muffin, bread with peanut butter or cheese, bowl of cereal with skim milk, low fat yogurt.

4 hours, or more

Any of the above, or lean meat sandwich, or pre-competition meal.

**ALL-DAY TOURNAMENT FOODS SHOULD BE HIGH IN CARBOHYDRATES AND LOW IN FAT AND PROTEIN.**

*Examples of foods to eat at a tournament include:*

Animal crackers  
Bagels with jam  
Bagels  
Breads  
Fresh fruit  
Fruit bread  
Fruit bars (ie. Fig Newtons)  
Graham crackers  
Juices  
Low-fat fruit bars  
Low-fat yogurt.  
Low-fat pudding cups  
Muffins  
Oatmeal cookies  
Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches  
Pretzels  
Popcorn, air-popped  
Sports drinks  
String cheese  
Turkey sandwiches with low-fat mayonnaise

Berning, Jackie & Coleman, Ellen, Professional Presentations, various dates; Nutrition Education Instructional Materials, Michigan Weight Monitoring Program, 1996.

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# NUTRITION IDEAS FOR WRESTLERS

## ***FAST FOODS***

Eating a healthy, balanced meal at a fast food restaurant can be a challenge for anyone. Wrestlers may think it is impossible for them to eat fast food without gaining weight. In reality, **there are choices at fast food restaurants that can fit into a wrestler's diet plan**. While fast food should not be the mainstay of anyone's diet, by following the ideas given below it is possible for wrestlers to occasionally eat fast food.

### **Here are a few ideas to help ensure a lower fat content in fast foods.**

Avoid mayonnaise and special sauces on sandwiches.

Avoid fried items such as fish, chicken, chicken nuggets, French toast sticks, and french fries.

Choose Swiss cheese as it is lower in fat than American.

Don't add gravies to foods.

Don't order foods with extra cheese or bacon added.

Drink low-fat milk.

If you have no choice but to order fried foods, remove the skin as it contains large amounts of fat.

Order salads with low-fat dressing.

Some food preparation methods can also help keep the calorie content from getting too high. Low fat cooking methods include steaming, roasting, poaching, broiling, baking, and cooked in its own juice.

The following is a comparison of high fat and low fat meal choices.

### **BREAKFAST**

#### **Low fat choices**

Bagels  
English muffin with jam or honey  
Hot or cold cereal  
Muffins  
Orange juice  
Pancakes with syrup, but little butter  
Low-fat milk  
Toast with jam

#### **High fat choices**

Bacon  
Hash rounds  
Sausage & egg sandwiches

## LUNCH & DINNER

### **Low fat choices**

Baked entrees  
Broiled meat  
Low-fat bean burrito  
Chef or side salads with low fat dressing  
Grilled lean hamburgers w/o special sauce  
Grilled chicken w/o mayonnaise  
Lean meat sandwiches  
Low-fat milk  
Low-fat yogurt cones  
Pizza with thin or hand tossed crust  
(Avoid pepperoni, sausage, extra cheese)

### **High fat choices**

Any deluxe sandwiches  
Chicken nuggets  
Crispy shell Mexican dishes  
French fries  
Fried chicken  
Hot dogs with cheese/chili  
Nachos Supreme  
Sandwiches with cheese  
Whole milk

In summary, while everyone should be careful when eating at fast food restaurants to avoid foods high in fat content, wrestlers must be very careful. There are healthy choices to be made at fast food restaurants and being prepared ahead of time will help in making good choices.

*Sources:* Eating on the Run, 2nd edition, Tribolo, E., 1992; Eating on the Road, U.S. Olympic Committee Sports Medicine Division and the International Center for Sports Medicine, 1993; Fast Foods, U.S. Olympic Committee Sports Medicine Division and the International Center for Sports Medicine, 1993; Nutrition Education Instructional Materials, Michigan Weight Monitoring Program, 1996; "Wise Food Choices for Athletes on the Road," Gatorade Sports Science Exchange #1, Berning, Jackie, 1988.

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# NUTRITION IDEAS FOR WRESTLERS

## ***A LITTLE SODIUM GOES A LONG WAY!***

Sodium is a mineral essential for good health and athletic performance. For optimum muscle functioning during exercise, one's body must have the proper balance of sodium and water. **However, too much sodium can lead to fluid retention because extra sodium requires additional water for dilution. Fluid retention results in weight gain and impaired athletic performance.**

Excessive amounts of sodium in the body can be caused by consuming too much sodium in one's diet or through fluid loss, especially by sweating. If this lost fluid is not replaced, it increases the sodium concentration in one's body. This triggers the thirst response which is why one usually drinks more water during exercise. If the body is deprived of water it becomes dehydrated. **In a dehydrated state the muscles cannot contract properly and are fatigued more easily.**

According to the National Research Council, 1100 to 3300 milligrams of sodium per day is adequate. Most Americans consume 2-6 times that amount! Sodium is most commonly found in table salt. A teaspoon of salt contains approximately 2300 milligrams of sodium.

*Follow these hints to reduce sodium in your diet:*

1. **Avoid the salt shaker!** Salty food is an acquired taste. After 2-3 months without the salt shaker, it won't be missed.
2. **Eat foods whose label's state "unsalted," "no salt added," "without added salt," or "low sodium" often.** Be careful of foods stating they have "reduced sodium" because they may have started with extremely high amounts of sodium.
3. **Eat pickles, ketchup, mustard, and special sauces sparingly** as they often contain high amounts of sodium.
4. **Eat processed foods like ham, bacon, and sausage sparingly.**
5. **Eat sparingly of foods listing salt or sodium as one of the first items on the label.**

*Here is a list of the sodium content in ten common foods:*

| <u>Food</u>                   | <u>Milligrams of sodium</u> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Dill pickle, whole            | 928 mg                      |
| Tomato juice, 6 ounces        | 658 mg                      |
| Low fat cottage cheese, ½ cup | 459 mg                      |
| Italian dressing, 2 Tbsp.     | 300 mg                      |
| Corn Flakes, 1 cup            | 281 mg                      |
| Potato chips, 1 ounce         | 216 mg                      |
| Instant pudding, ½ cup        | 161 mg                      |
| White bread, 1 slice          | 129 mg                      |
| Skim milk, 8 ounces           | 126 mg                      |
| Cocktail peanuts, 1 ounce     | 118 mg                      |

Sources: Boise State University Wellness Web Site, <[www.boisestate.edu/wellness/bsu\\_wellness\\_info/sodium.htm](http://www.boisestate.edu/wellness/bsu_wellness_info/sodium.htm)>; Johns Hopkins University Nutrition Web Site, <[www.med.jhu.edu/nutrition/sodium.htm](http://www.med.jhu.edu/nutrition/sodium.htm)>

# NUTRITION IDEAS FOR WRESTLERS

## ***ENERGY FOR IMPROVED WRESTLING PERFORMANCE***

**There is nothing a wrestler can eat between the time of weigh-in and his first match to compensate for a poor diet and drastic weight loss during the days before a match.** The handout titled, “***Nutrition Ideas for Wrestlers: Eating Healthy Every Day,***” contains ideas about what wrestlers should be eating on a daily basis to keep their energy levels high. **The key to having adequate energy to wrestle effectively is to eat a healthy, balanced diet every day.**

Between the time of weigh-in and competition it is extremely important for wrestlers to drink water, a sports drink, fruit juice, or vegetable juice. Recent research has shown drinking fluids as little as 30-60 minutes before exercise will improve performance.

***Here are some ideas of what wrestlers could eat and drink between the time of weigh-in and competition. Those wrestlers who will wrestle within 60 minutes after weighing in should limit their intake to fluids, probably sports drinks and water.***

apple  
apple juice  
banana  
grapes  
orange  
orange juice

peaches  
pears  
**sports drink**  
vegetable juice  
**water**  
yogurt, sweetened

It is also important for wrestlers to eat high carbohydrate foods which will quickly replace the energy used during practice or competition. Within 15 - 30 minutes after practice, or a match, wrestlers need to eat to replenish their fuel supply.

***Examples of foods to eat immediately after exercise are:***

angel food cake  
bagels  
bananas  
carrots  
Cheerios\*, with low-fat milk  
corn bread or muffins  
Corn Flakes\*, with low-fat milk  
graham crackers  
Grape Nut Flakes\*, with low-fat milk  
grapes  
low-fat, fruit yogurt

pretzels, especially low sodium  
raisins  
rice cakes  
Rice Krispies\*, with low-fat milk  
Shredded Wheat\*, with low-fat milk  
sports drinks, especially high carbohydrate  
(These may cause stomach upset if one is not used to drinking them.)  
watermelon  
wheat cracker  
white rice



orange juice  
pineapple or pineapple juice  
potatoes; baked, instant, or mashed

white or wheat bread with honey  
\* = brand name product

By eating these same foods between matches during a tournament, wrestlers can keep their energy levels high throughout the day.

**Especially after practice or competition, avoid foods high in fat and salt.** Both of these will cause weight gain over the next few days due to water retention.

It is also very important for wrestlers to drink plenty of water during and after workouts, and during tournaments. **Lack of water reduces physical and mental performance much more quickly than lack of food.** Drinking during the day at school, before workouts, during and after workouts, and during tournaments will help prevent wrestlers from becoming dehydrated.

*Sources:* "Taking It To the Mat: The Wrestler's Guide to Optimal Performance," The Center for Nutrition in Sport and Human Performance, University of Massachusetts, 1999; Training and Conditioning, "A New Facet in Performance Nutrition," Morgan, Tracy, CSCS; Gatorade Sports Science Exchange, "Glycemic Index and Exercise Metabolism," Volume 10, 1997.