
**G E T T I N G R E A D Y
T O P L A Y**





HEALTH

DIET

HYDRATION

SLEEP



DON'T LET YOUR DIET LET YOU DOWN

by

Robert J. Reber, Associate Professor in Nutrition
Donald K. Layman, Professor in Nutrition.

Athletics is becoming increasingly competitive. More and more stress is being placed on how well you perform. To reach your highest potential, all of your body systems must be perfectly tuned. Nothing is more important to your well-being and ability to perform than good nutrition. Eating the right foods helps you maintain desirable body weight, stay physically fit, and establish optimum nerve-muscle reflexes. Without the right foods, even physical conditioning and expert coaching aren't enough to push you to your best. Good nutrition must be a key part of your training program if you are to succeed.

There is no one "miracle food" or supplement that can supply all of your nutritional needs. Certain foods supply mainly proteins, other foods contain vitamins and minerals, and so on. The key to balancing your diet is to combine different foods so that nutrient deficiencies in some foods are made up by nutrient surpluses in others. Eating a variety of foods is the secret.

The nutrients--the proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, minerals, and water--are teammates that work together to provide good nutrition. Just as each team member carries out different tasks during a game, each nutrient performs specific functions in your body. A lack of just one nutrient is a disadvantage to your body, just as losing a player to the penalty box is a disadvantage for a hockey team. Your body needs all these nutrients all of the time, so the foods you eat should supply them every day.

Just because you are not hungry does not necessarily mean that your body has all the nutrients it needs. You can fill up on foods that contain mostly carbohydrates and fats, but your body still has basic needs for proteins, minerals, and vitamins.

Pre-Game Meals

What you eat every day can have a big effect on how you perform. What you eat right before an event can be critical. Wrong choices can be disastrous. Right choices can give you that competitive edge.

While the pre-game meal can supply your body with significant amounts of energy, don't expect it to supply all the energy you'll need for the event. You should eat the right kinds of food for several days before the event to charge up your muscles with glycogen. Glycogen is a key energy source your muscles use during most sports activities. Although the pre-game meal won't cause large increases in muscle glycogen, it will:

- Help avoid hunger during the event
- Stabilize blood-sugar levels and add some food energy to complement existing energy stores of muscle glycogen
- Hydrate the body (supply water to the body's cells)
- Provide a relatively empty stomach at game time
- Prevent gastrointestinal upset or other adverse reactions to food

No one pre-game meal is right for every athlete or every event, but some food choices are much smarter than others. General guidelines for individual food selection and meal planning are on the following page. Make sure your pre-game meal plans follow these guidelines.


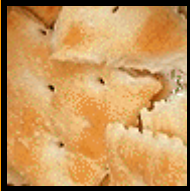
Pre-game Meal Guidelines






Make sure your pre-game meal plans follow these guidelines

- Allow enough time for digestion. Eat the meal at least three hours before an event.
- Choose a meal that's high in starch. Starch is easy to digest and helps steady the levels of blood sugar.
- Consume only moderate amounts of protein. Protein foods take longer to digest than starch. And high-protein meals may lead to increased urine production, which can add to dehydration.
- Limit fats and oils. They take too long to digest.
- Restrict sugary foods. Sweets can cause rapid energy swings in blood sugar levels and result in low blood sugar and less energy.
- Avoid foods and drinks that contain caffeine. Caffeine stimulates the body to increase urine output, which can contribute to dehydration problems, and a full bladder can be very uncomfortable.
- Watch out for foods that produce gas. Certain raw vegetables, fruits, or beans may cause problems for some young athletes. Be aware of the foods that cause you problems, and avoid them just before an event.
- Within these guidelines, chose foods you like to eat.
- Remember to drink plenty of fluids with your pre-game meal.

Pre-Game Meal Examples

Here are some nutritious pre-game meal plans that fit the pre-game guidelines. At least three of the five major groups are represented in each meal. These meals are only suggestions. You can probably think up many more that you would like to eat.

<p>Meal 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Cereal (avoid highly sweetened cereals)▪ Banana slices▪ Milk (low-fat or skim)▪ Toast/jam▪ Pineapple juice*▪ Water	
<p>Meal 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Chicken noodle soup▪ Crackers▪ Orange▪ Low-fat yogurt▪ Water	

<p>Meal 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poached Egg ▪ Toast/jam ▪ Milk (low-fat or skim) ▪ Orange juice ▪ Water 	
<p>Meal 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pancakes (limit butter and syrup) ▪ Applesauce ▪ Milk (low-fat or skim) ▪ Grape juice ▪ Water 	
<p>Meal 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Turkey sandwich/bread and lettuce ▪ Apple ▪ Milk (low-fat or skim) ▪ Tomato juice* ▪ Water 	
<p>Meal 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cottage cheese/peach ▪ Breadsticks ▪ Milk (low-fat or skim) ▪ Apple juice ▪ Water 	
<p>Meal 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Spaghetti/tomato sauce ▪ Bread ▪ Milk (low-fat or skim) ▪ Orange juice* ▪ Water 	

FOODS TO CHOOSE

Foods	Comments
<p>Pasta</p> <p>Macaroni, spaghetti, noodles, ravioli (plain or with sauce)</p>	<p>Meats, cheese, and oil add fat to the sauce. Use them sparingly.</p>
<p>Rice</p>	<p>Use a sauce low in fat and only as spicy as you can tolerate easily. Or try rice with a little soy sauce flavoring.</p>
<p>Potatoes</p> <p>Baked, boiled, mashed, but not French fries.</p>	<p>Limit butter, gravy, or sour cream.</p>
<p>Starchy vegetables</p> <p>Peas, carrots, winter squash, sweet potatoes</p>	<p>Cooked vegetables are more easily digested.</p>
<p>Breads</p> <p>Rolls, muffins, crackers, quick breads, bagels.</p>	<p>Use nutritious, low-fat bread products and spreads.</p>
<p>Cereals</p> <p>Oatmeal, other hot cereals, cold cereals</p>	<p>Avoid cereals with high sugar content.</p>
<p>Soups</p> <p>Noodle, rice, vegetable, clear broth, bouillon, or consommé.</p>	<p>Choose low-fat soups. Eating large portions of chilli, split pea, or bean soups may lead to digestive problems for some athletes.</p>
<p>Pancakes</p>	<p>Limit butter and syrup.</p>
<p>Fruits, fruit juices</p>	<p>Use any juice or cooked fruit except prune. Oranges, bananas, and peeled apples are easily digested raw fruits. You may wish to dilute juices, especially in hot weather. Try hot cider or juice during cold weather.</p>
<p>Milk products</p> <p>Low-fat milk, low-fat yogurt, low-fat cottage cheese, low-fat cheeses, puddings, "shakes" made with low-fat milk or yogurt and fruit and/or juice</p>	<p>Avoid high-fat milk products before games.</p>
<p>Liquid meals in a can</p>	<p>Though not a substitute for solid foods in the daily diet, liquid meals are convenient for occasional pre-game use.</p>

FOODS TO AVOID

Foods	Comments
Candy, sugar, honey	After an initial rise, your blood-sugar level can actually drop below normal, resulting in a sudden feeling of tiredness or fatigue.
Tea, coffee, chocolate, cola	Caffeine consumption leads to dehydration.
Fried foods, high-fat meats, fats, oils, gravies, sour cream, etc.	Fat digests slowly and therefore stays in the stomach longer.
Some raw fruits, vegetables, popcorn, nuts, dry beans and peas	Some of these foods may cause gas and/or an uncomfortable feeling of fullness during the game. An athlete needs to avoid the foods that give him or her problems.
Any new food	Don't experiment with new foods right before an event. If you experience any adverse reactions, your body has little time to recover.
Fruit-flavored drinks	Many drinks contain little fruit juice and a lot of sugar. Read the label.

No Time?

Plan ahead to have your favorite quick pre-game foods on hand during the season. If possible, eat at least three hours before you compete.

If you only have time for a quick trip to the store, consider these possibilities:

- Oranges, bananas, pears, peaches, plums
- Juices
- Mozzarella string cheese
- Yogurt (low-fat)
- Single-portion cans of fruit
- Breadsticks / snack sticks
- Bread with jelly
- Cottage cheese (low-fat)
- Milk (low-fat or skim)

Remember: Eat foods you like and that agree with you for pre-game meals. You are an individual with your own tolerances for foods. Choosing foods you like may give you a psychological edge.

HYDRATION

Just Satisfying Thirst is not Enough

Thirst is your body's signal that you need to drink water. By the time you feel thirsty, you may have already lost one percent to two percent of your water--and that's enough to hurt performance. But just drinking enough to satisfy your thirst may not supply your body's needs. If you drink only enough to satisfy your thirst, your body may take up to 24 hours to fully re-hydrate its cells and regain maximum performance.

When you participate in a sporting event or practice session, follow these guidelines:

- Don't wait until you are thirsty before drinking water.
- Drink more than enough to satisfy your thirst.
- Drink more than you think you need before an event or practice to make sure you are fully re-hydrated.

Avoid Drinks with Caffeine

Some drinks that have caffeine, such as colas and iced tea, are advertised as thirst quenchers. Do not use caffeine-containing beverages as fluid re-hydration drinks shortly before, during, and after a practice or competition. Caffeine acts as a diuretic. It increases urine output and can promote dehydration.

Take every opportunity to drink water and other appropriate fluids. Drink fluids every day, even when you are not thirsty. That means drinking at mealtime--and snack time, too! As a competition or practice approaches, follow these guidelines:

- Drink plenty of appropriate fluids the 24 hours before an event. Give your body every opportunity to become fully re-hydrated.
- If you eat a pre-game meal three or more hours before an event, make sure that ample fluids are included--at least two cups (16 ounces).
- About 15 to 30 minutes before the start of competition or practice, drink a cup or more of fluids. This will help ensure that your tissues are fully re-hydrated at the start.
- During the activity, drink six to eight ounces of fluids every 15 to 20 minutes. Drinking moderate amounts frequently is the best way to keep fluid levels up. If you drink too much too quickly, you may develop stomach cramps and other discomfort.
- Drink plenty of fluids after the activity. If you weigh in before and after activities, drink two cups (16 ounces) for every pound lost until you are within a pound of your pre-activity weight.
- Remember to drink fluids before you get thirsty. If you wait until you're thirsty, your body may have already lost enough water to hurt your performance.

Getting it all down means you can perform at your best levels. Your endurance will be long lasting and you won't become as tired. You will have that extra edge when you need it most--whether it's the last few minutes of the contest or the last 10 meters before the finish line.

Remember to power up with good food every day so you can take full advantage of a well-hydrated body.

SLEEP

As you continue to grow, you go through many changes, including changes in sleep. You thrive on a regular sleep and wake schedule, even on the weekends. Sleep should follow a relaxing bedtime routine. The bedroom should be cool, dark and quiet. Getting a good night's rest may become more difficult as you grow older due to increased responsibilities and activities, the impact of TV, computers and caffeine or untreated sleep disorders. However, sleep is still a vital part of your performance, health and overall quality of life, and should still be a priority.

So, how do you measure how much sleep they need? If you are having trouble staying alert during school, long drives, while reading a book or in other quiet situations when sleepiness is often "unmasked," you probably are not getting enough quality sleep. Other signs of chronic sleep deprivation are irritability, difficulty concentrating or making decisions, loss of short-term memory or becoming overly aggressive.

Sports and Sleep

If you are experiencing sleep deprivation, your athletic performance may suffer. Sleep deprivation does not mean you pulled an all-nighter. Building a cumulative sleep debt, getting less than the 9 1/4 hours of sleep you need per night, can produce the same results in as little as two weeks. Given that 85% of teens get less than 8 1/2 hours of sleep per night, our star quarterback is probably suffering from sleep deprivation and stifling his true athletic potential.

Some effects of sleep deprivation on sports performance are physiological, which means they happen in the body. These can include:

- **Impaired motor function**, which can include tremors, lack of coordination, blurred vision, and/or prolonged reaction time. In fact, reaction time has been shown to be equally slowed in sleep-deprived individuals as those who are legally drunk!
- **Delayed visual reaction time** so that by the time you see the ball heading toward you, it could hit you in the head!
- **Delayed auditory reaction time** means that you may not hear your teammate calling to you until it is too late.
- **Reduced cardiovascular performance** can mean that your fitness may be down by as much as 11%.
- **Diminished mental functioning** can occur so that you will not be able to remember the plays you learned at practice yesterday.
- **Reduced endurance** which means that you may get tired sooner because glucose storage is slowed with sleep deprivation.

Some of the effects are emotional or psychological. These can be equally harmful to your performance at a big game. They include:

- **Increased perceived exertion**: even if you can physically perform at similar levels, you will feel tired more quickly and give up.
- **Impaired moods**: sleep deprivation can leave you in a bad mood; you'll certainly not be at the top mental state you need for a championship match!

On the positive side, getting enough sleep will actually help you to learn new physical skills. Studies have shown that sleep builds procedural memory, so you'll remember the plays you trained for over and over at practice. Motor skills continue to be learned as you sleep. You will notice an improvement the next day, even if you have not practiced since.

Your body works very hard every day to keep up with all of the things that you do. You put it through a grueling day at school, a few hours of homework, and if you add athletics on top of that, you are really pushing the limits of your body. Sleep is absolutely essential to maintaining a level of success in all of these activities, as well as in your relationships, health and appearance.

How Much Sleep Do I Need?

What you are getting and what you need are 2 very different things. The average teenager needs between 8 ½ and 9 ½ hours of sleep per day. I know what you are thinking. “How the heck am I going to get that much sleep with all the stuff I have to do?” You have to schedule your life a bit better and get to bed on time. I think you will find that you will be a much more productive and pleasant person with plenty of sleep.

Tips for Good Napping

- **The right length:** A short nap is usually recommended (20-30 minutes) for short-term alertness. This type of nap provides significant benefit for improved alertness and performance without leaving you feeling groggy or interfering with nighttime sleep.
- **The right environment:** Your surroundings can greatly impact your ability to fall asleep. Make sure that you have a restful place to lie down and that the temperature in the room is comfortable. Try to limit the amount of noise heard and the extent of the light filtering in. While some studies have shown that just spending time in bed can be beneficial, it is better to try to catch some zzz's.
- **The right time:** If you take a nap too late in the day, it might affect your nighttime sleep patterns and make it difficult to fall asleep at your regular bedtime. If you try to take it too early in the day, your body may not be ready for more sleep.

Benefits of Napping

- Naps can restore alertness, enhance performance, and reduce mistakes and accidents. A study at NASA on sleepy military pilots and astronauts found that a 40-minute nap improved performance by 34% and alertness 100%.
- Naps can increase alertness in the period directly following the nap and may extend alertness a few hours later in the day.
- Scheduled napping has also been prescribed for those who are affected by narcolepsy.
- Napping has psychological benefits. A nap can be a pleasant luxury, a mini-vacation. It can provide an easy way to get some relaxation and rejuvenation.

Negative Effects of Napping

- Sleep inertia is defined as the feeling of grogginess and disorientation that can come with awakening from a deep sleep. While this state usually only lasts for a few minutes to a half-hour, it can be detrimental to those who must perform immediately after waking from a napping period. Post-nap impairment and disorientation is more severe, and can last longer, in people who are sleep deprived or nap for longer periods.
- Napping can also have a negative effect on other sleeping periods. A long nap or a nap taken too late in the day may adversely affect the length and quality of nighttime sleep. If you have trouble sleeping at night, a nap will only amplify problems.

Information Provided By The National Sleep Foundation

SLEEP TIPS FOR PLAYERS

- **Organize your life for sleep:** Make sleep a priority. Decide what you need to change to get enough sleep to stay healthy, happy, and smart!
- **A quick pick-me-up:** Naps can help pick you up and make you work more efficiently, if you plan them right. Naps that are too long or too close to bedtime can interfere with your regular sleep.
- **Create the right space:** Make your room a sleep haven. Keep it cool, quiet and dark. If you need to, get eyeshades or blackout curtains. Let in bright light in the morning to signal your body to wake up.
- **You can't fake wake:** No pills, vitamins or drinks can replace good sleep. Consuming caffeine close to bedtime can hurt your sleep, so avoid coffee, tea, soda/pop and chocolate late in the day so you can get to sleep at night. Nicotine and alcohol will also interfere with your sleep.
- **Drowsy driving is as dangerous as drunk driving:** When you are sleep deprived, you are as impaired as driving with a blood alcohol content of .08%, which is illegal for drivers in many states. Drowsy driving causes over 100,000 crashes each year. Recognize sleep deprivation and call someone else for a ride. Only sleep can save you!
- **Keep it constant:** Establish a bed and wake-time and stick to it, coming as close as you can on the weekends. A consistent sleep schedule will help you feel less tired since it allows your body to get in sync with its natural patterns. You will find that it's easier to fall asleep at bedtime with this type of routine.
- **Prepare your body:** Don't eat, drink, or exercise within a few hours of your bedtime. Don't leave your homework for the last minute. Try to avoid the TV, computer and telephone in the hour before you go to bed. Stick to quiet, calm activities, and you'll fall asleep much more easily!
- **Create a bedtime ritual:** If you do the same things every night before you go to sleep, you teach your body the signals that it's time for bed. Try taking a bath or shower (this will leave you extra time in the morning), or reading a book.
- **Leave stress out of it:** Try keeping a diary or to-do lists. If you jot notes down before you go to sleep, you'll be less likely to stay awake worrying or stressing.
- **Talk to your friends about your sleep:** When you hear your friends talking about their all-nighters, tell them how good you feel after getting enough sleep.
- **Understand your body:** Most teens experience changes in their sleep schedules. Their internal body clocks can cause them to fall asleep and wake up later. You can't change this, but you can participate in interactive activities and classes to help counteract your sleepiness. Make sure your activities at night are calming to counteract your already heightened alertness.

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POINTERS FOR PARENTS

What can you do to be sure your teen gets enough sleep to be healthy and perform at his or her best?

- **Learn** about physical, behavioral and emotional changes that occur in adolescence and how sleep is affected.
- **Know** the signs of insufficient sleep in teens. They include difficulty waking in the morning, irritability late in the day, falling asleep during quiet times in the day and sleeping for extra long periods on the weekends.
- **Decide** on age-appropriate schedules for your family and work to maintain them.
- **Talk** with your teens to make sure they are getting the amount of sleep required. If not, help them to adjust or balance school, work, and activity demands to make sure that an appropriate amount of sleep can be fit into their daily schedule. Work with your teens to help make the hard choices of what activities to cut back on so that they can increase and get the amount of sleep they need.
- **Encourage** your children to keep a sleep diary for two weeks, and to share it with you. This can provide immediate insight into sleep habits that could use improvement, and can be used to measure progress.
- **Plan** ahead if your child's sleep schedule while on vacation is different from an upcoming school schedule. Move back to "school time" gradually, since this transition can take several days to several weeks to complete.
- **Seek** the opinion of a sleep expert if you think your child may have a sleep disorder. Sleepiness can be a sign of serious but treatable sleep disorders such as narcolepsy, sleep apnea, or restless legs syndrome.
- **Become** a good role model by making sleep a high priority for yourself and your family.
- **Establish** a home environment that promotes healthy sleep habits. Quiet time in the evenings should be free of loud music and bright lighting. Limit your child's use of the computer, radio, TV, phone or instant messaging close to bedtime. These devices in the bedroom can disrupt sleep.
- **Advocate** for positive changes in your community and schools by increasing public awareness about sleep and related disorders. Support sleep-smart policies and request that sleep curricula be included. Encourage your school district to enact policies that will benefit the sleep health of all students, such as later school start times for adolescents.
- **Understand** that the consequences of sleep deprivation include increased chance of falling asleep car crashes, poor health, poor grades, depression, substance abuse, aggressive conduct, and behavior problems.
- **Create** a sleep-friendly room for your teen that is cool, quiet and dark. Lights should be dim close to bedtime to signal the brain when it is time to sleep, and bright light used in the morning to signal the brain when it is time to wake up.
- **Restrict** the use of sleep disturbing products including pills and caffeine. Consuming caffeine late in the day can disturb sleep many hours later.
- **Organize** active family activities. Exercise can improve sleep, but make sure it is not too close to bedtime.

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