



EATING ON THE RUN

Nourishing Health & Performance

Fall 2016

QUICKBITES

Competition Day - Eat What You're Used To

"Don't try anything new" may be the most important race-day advice you can follow. The day before the race and the morning of the race, only eat food that you've had before. You don't want to try something new – as healthy as it may be – and find out that it doesn't agree with you. Test

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Veggie Power!

Vegetables have many health benefits for athletes. They contain the vitamins, minerals, and fiber you need to stay healthy. These nutrients help you to recover from tough workouts, maintain a strong immune system, and stay energized throughout the day. If you struggle to eat enough vegetables, you're not alone! Here are some research-tested tips to help you eat more vegetables and get all the benefits they have to offer:

Eat the rainbow. The USDA's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion divides vegetables into five groups: dark green, red and orange, beans and peas, starchy, and other (everything else!). Each group of vegetables contains different nutrients, so it's important to include all groups throughout the week. A good way to make sure you get enough of each group is to think about eating different colors each time vegetables are served.

Makeover your meals. Lots of meals can

be altered to increase the vegetable content. If you like spaghetti, try adding pureed veggies like carrots to the sauce. Do your love mac and cheese? Try adding frozen peas or broccoli to the pasta when it's nearly cooked.



Build your snack around a vegetable, and you can come up with a sweet or savory treat. For something sweet, bake [black bean brownies](#) or chickpea cookies. Or dice up a small tomato and an avocado, and mix with lime juice and onion for healthy guacamole that you can eat by itself or enjoy with baked

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Gluten and Athletic Performance

Youth sports are becoming increasingly competitive and athletes, coaches, parents, trainers, and dietitians are constantly searching for new methods for improving athletic performance. As the importance of food choices becomes more apparent many individuals turn their focus to fad diets, nutrition beliefs, and supplement intake to gain a competitive edge.

One nutrition strategy that continues to gain popularity is the use of gluten free (GF) diets to improve performance. This is of no surprise as so many individuals are following a GF diet for health issues and weight loss efforts. Currently, there is no good evidence that eating GF will in fact improve athletic performance. However, there are still many high-profile athletes who are expressing that eating GF has helped them reach top athleticism.

A recent review of research published in *Current Sports Medicine Reports* states that there are possible reasons why athletes think that eating GF has helped their performance. One of these reasons is that many athletes are already experiencing adverse stomach issues primarily due to the increased stress they are putting on their bodies. Endurance athletes especially are constantly dealing with gastrointestinal upset due to dehydration, heat, stress, and foods that are eaten during training and events. Eating GF is one method endurance athletes use to try to address their stomach issues.

Although there is no good evidence supporting the GF

trend, athletes may be trying to make better food choices and increasing their awareness of eating healthy foods. This does not mean that gluten containing foods are unhealthy; however. Eating a bagel vs. an apple and peanut butter provides different types of nutrients. Athletes also may be trying to increase their nutrient intake by increasing their intake of “whole” food, such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, lean meats, and lean dairy products. Consuming a balanced diet is difficult when restricting foods or nutrients (such as gluten) but if careful attention is paid to food choices it can be done.

Researchers also feel that there is a psychological factor due to the increased hype of GF eating. Gluten containing foods have made the list of potentially unhealthy foods with increased popularity of GF diets and popular books such as *Wheat Belly*. Athletes might psychologically start to believe that GF foods are inflammatory foods and should be avoided. Again, there is not good evidence to support the many health claims against gluten that can be found in popular media.

If an athlete does decide to try GF eating, their diet should be carefully monitored for any nutritional excesses or deficiencies. The take home message for all athletes is that eating a well-rounded diet will help provide the best support for athletic performance. Food choice is certainly a personal endeavor and athletes will need to find the proper foods for themselves within the recommendations for health and athletic performance.

Eating During the School Day

Fresh fruit and vegetables are healthful snack choices. Consider taking whole fruits, pre-cut vegetables and fruits to school for between class, before, and after practice snacks. Whole, unprocessed fruits and vegetables are rich in water, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals and fiber. Foods can be packaged in reusable containers to prevent your produce from being crushed by the books in your backpack. Freezing plastic water bottles containing water or juice to include in an insulated lunch bag along with the snacks keeps them cool and gives you a cool beverage for hydration later in the day as it melts.

Try these great snack combinations:

- Carrots + Celery sticks + Peanuts
- Peaches + Nectarines + Almonds
- Sweet Peppers + Grape Tomatoes + Snap Peas
- Radishes + Cauliflower + Broccoli
- Apples + Plums + Walnuts
- Grapes + Cherries + Pecans
- Berries + Bananas + Pears

Eating on the Road

Athletic competitions inevitably require travel, and making positive food and fluid choices while travelling is difficult. This can be especially challenging in Wyoming, as the smaller population results in fewer options for places to purchase food. Eating well is an investment that will pay dividends in both health and athletic performance.

Planning ahead is the most important step for busy athletes and their families. Consider the duration of travel, how much food will be needed, and whether it can be packed ahead or will need to be purchased while travelling. Packing ahead is a great option as it reduces the risk of poor food choices on the road. If you aren't able to pack the foods needed it's important to consider the food options available during your travel. The table below outlines some good tips whether packing or eating out.

Fluid choices are just as important as food choices. Be sure to maintain hydration by keeping a water bottle handy. Sports drinks are typically not needed while travelling and sodas, energy drinks, or other sugary beverages are a poor choice. Dairy-based or other 'recovery' beverages may be

useful after competition - especially if it will be more than an hour before the next snack or meal.

In addition to eating (and drinking) the right *things* it is also important to eat (and drink) at the right *times*. It is recommended that the last meal be 3-4 hours before strenuous activity. Easily digestible (think light!) snacks are okay for most individuals until 60-90 minutes before activity. Within one hour of activity - as well as during activities >1 hour - a sports drink may be appropriate.

Remember that unfamiliar foods should be limited before a competition. Foods that are known to be well-tolerated will be the best choices when an athlete's body is already stressed by training, travel, and pre-game jitters. Wait until after the game to try that exciting new dish!

Please keep food safety in mind by keeping hot foods hot and cold foods cold! Washing and prepping foods before travel can also help to keep foods clean and safe. Eating well on the road is never easy, but with a little bit of work (and practice!) athletes of all types can enjoy the benefits of good food and fluid choices while travelling.

Healthy Cooler Snacks:

Use an ice pack to help keep these foods chilled

- Yogurt (be mindful of added sugars in flavored varieties)
- Vegetables with hummus (recipe here: www.bit.ly/chickpeahummus)
- Hard boiled eggs
- Sandwiches with lean meat

Shelf-Stable Snacks:

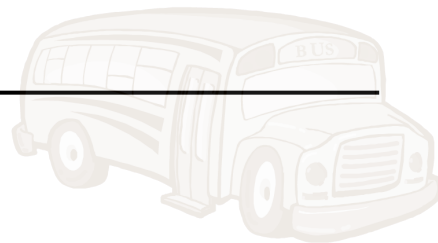
These foods are great options when you are not able to keep things cool

- Fresh fruits (be sure to wash first!)
- Crackers and tuna packets
- Nut butter sandwiches
- Trail mix or roasted nuts (lower salt varieties preferred)
- Sport bars or granola bars (avoid those high in sugar)

Options for Eating Out:

Use nutrition facts labels and ingredient lists to help guide decisions on unfamiliar foods. Look for whole grains and fiber while limiting added sugars, salt, and fat.

- **Convenience store:** Look for foods you would buy in a grocery store. Many convenience stores are stocking fresh fruits and lowfat dairy products. There are often sport bars and granola bars available, but watch out for those high in added sugars!
- **Fast food:** Try to choose items that are broiled, baked, or grilled as opposed to breaded or fried. Side salads and fruits are often available, but limit high fat dressings and dips.
- **Traditional restaurant:** Search menus online (if possible) to find the restaurant with the best choices. They may be able to prepare something specific for a large team or group if you call ahead.



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tortilla chips.

Keep your veggies in the front of the fridge. It's easy to forget to eat your veggies when they're in the back of the fridge or buried in the crisper drawer. Although keeping vegetables in the crisper can help them last longer, the goal is to eat them, not keep them forever! Slicing up veggies like carrots, celery, and peppers ahead of time can also make it easier to choose them for a quick snack or side.

For more tips, check out the following sites:

www.choosemyplate.gov/vegetables

www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org



QUICKBITES

out your pre-race meal before a hard training activity to make sure it doesn't upset your stomach. A carbohydrate-rich dinner the night before is best, but you don't need to overdo it and eat much more than normal. Your pre-competition breakfast should also be carbohydrate-rich, but include some good sources of protein and fat as well..

Competition Day - Wear What You're Used To

The same rule applies to what you wear! There's nothing worse than getting blisters or chaffing during your race because you decided to try new equipment or apparel. If you're considering wearing shoes or clothing that you don't normally wear, make

sure to try them out in one of your hard training efforts to make sure they will work well for you.

Power-Packed Breakfast

After your body has been fasting all night there is no better way to jump-start your metabolism than by eating a powerful breakfast meal. Eating in the morning helps with brain function, memory, attention span, and gives the energy needed for athletic pursuits. Here are a few good ways to start your day:

- Scrambled eggs and toast
- Waffles with peanut butter
- Hot oatmeal and fruit
- Yogurt Parfait
- Breakfast burrito

Choose whole grains whenever possible to start your day right!

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