

A High-Performance Diet

Teenage athletes have especially high nutritional demands because they are still growing. Many teens need 2,500 – 3,000 calories daily for growth, health, and to meet the energy demands of sports. Some may need even more, depending on their sport.

The best training diet for a teenage athlete is a varied, moderate, and balanced eating plan. It supplies the right amount of nutrients and energy to help achieve and maintain strength, flexibility, and endurance.

The following tips can help make the difference between winning and losing:

Forget the fads – Get back to basics. Select a variety of foods.

Consume the minimum servings from all five food groups each day.

Choose snacks that are nutritious and high in carbohydrates. Keep nutritious snacks on hand such as an apple, banana, dried fruit, juice, pretzels, bagels, or crackers.

Set time aside for meals in spite of the time demands of practice, competition, and school. Regular meals and healthy snacks help provide adequate nutrients.

Drink fluids regularly –Even slight dehydration impairs athletic performance.

Eat enough to maintain body weight and avoid drastic weight changes.

Establish realistic goals for your weight and body-fat levels. Get help from a health care provider to determine what's best for you.

Source: Duyff, RL. 1996. The American Dietetic Association's Complete Food and Nutrition Guide. Minneapolis, MN: Chronimed Publ., OCHD Nutrition Services February 2004



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