

2002

Healthy Eating for Athletes

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Recommended Citation

Bergs, Karen, "Healthy Eating for Athletes" (2002). *All Archived Publications*. Paper 691.
http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension_histall/691

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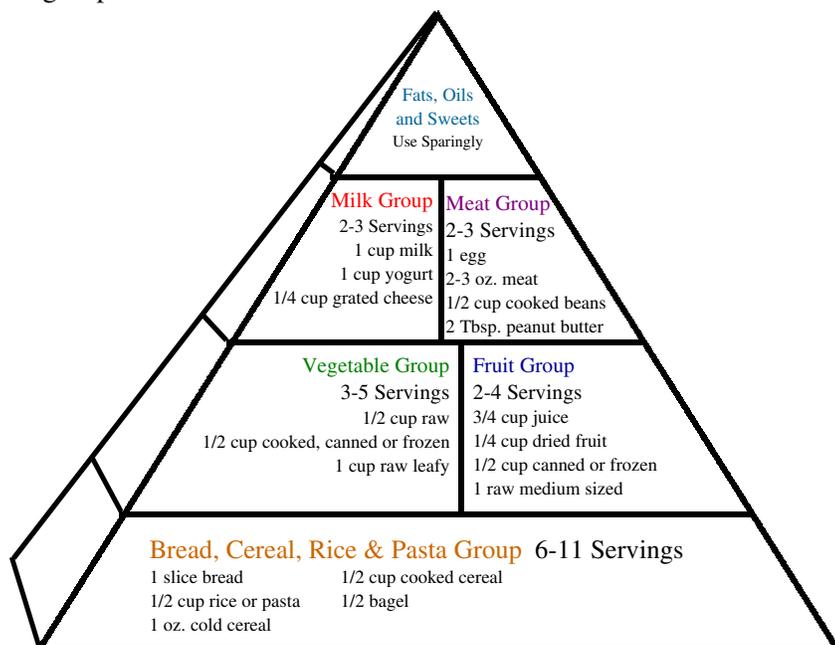


Healthy Eating for Athletes

Karen Bergs, R.D.

The Food Guide Pyramid

Athletes should follow the guidelines as outlined in the Food Guide Pyramid. Whether you are trying to gain, lose or maintain weight, it is important for you to choose foods from all food groups.



Fluids: A Key Nutrient

With all of the activity you do, it is important to drink plenty of fluids.

- Do not rely on thirst as an indicator of your body's hydration status. Signs of dehydration are: dry skin, dry mouth and throat, rapid heart rate, lack of energy and weakness.
- Drink fluids before, during and after an event.
- Drink fluids even if you are not thirsty.
- Caffeine containing drinks are not the best fluid replacer. They can actually make you dehydrated.
- Make sure to drink enough fluids if the weather is very hot or humid.
- Sports drinks are more expensive than drinking water.
- Weigh yourself before and after an event. For every pound you lose, drink 2 cups of water.



Why Are Carbohydrates So Important?

- * Carbohydrates are needed to fuel your body. Without enough carbohydrates, you will not run like you should.
- * Make sure that 60 to 65% of your diet is coming from carbohydrates. If you eat 2200 calories per day, 60% is 330 grams of carbohydrate.
- * Eating lots of complex carbohydrates will help you to work out longer. Complex carbohydrates include bread, cereal, pasta, rice, and vegetables.
- * When you need a short burst of energy such as for sprinting, the fuel your muscles use is carbohydrates.
- * Carbohydrates are also burned off during intense exercise.
- * Foods high in carbohydrates are not high in calories. It's the fatty toppings you put on them like butter and sour cream that add lots of calories.





What About Protein?

You may have heard that since you are an athlete or body builder, you need a lot more protein. This is not the case.

You only need about 12-15% of your calories from protein. For example, if you eat 2500 calories, then you need 75 to 94 grams of protein per day. Some of the functions of protein are to build and repair tissues, to transport nutrients, and to make your muscles contract.

- * Non-athletes need about 0.8 gram of protein per kilogram of body weight. To determine weight in kilograms, divide your weight in pounds by 2.2. For example 160 lbs. is 73 kilograms (73 kg x 0.8 = 58 grams of protein per day).
- * Athletes, and even weight lifters need 0.8 to 1 gram of protein per kilogram of body weight.
- * Extra protein or protein supplements do not build more muscle. Working the muscle is the key!
- * Most athletes and non-athletes get enough protein in their daily diet.
- * If you eat more protein than your body needs, it's converted into body fat if you consume more calories than your body needs. In some cases it can be used for energy, but this is expensive fuel. Carbohydrates are a better fuel to use for energy.



The Truth About Supplements...

Supplements are a big business today. Companies try to promote their products with catchy ads and famous athletes. It is important to look at where the information is coming from. Many people are out to make money, selling worthless products. You can get all the vitamins and minerals your body needs from eating a variety of foods. Here are some tips on supplements:

- Question "claims". If there is no scientific data, steer clear.
- Watch out for claims of quick and easy results. Nothing happens without some effort.
- Vitamins and minerals do not give you energy or build muscle.
- More of something doesn't mean it is better!
- If you do choose a supplement, read the label. Look for vitamin and mineral supplements that contain no more than 100% of the RDAs.

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Granola

Serves 10

4 cups rolled oats
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup canola oil
1/4 cup water
Optional: 1 cup raisins, chopped
dates, dried apricots, 1/2 cup sunflower seeds

Preheat oven to 300°. In a large bowl, combine the oats and sugar. Combine the water and oil. Mix liquid with dry ingredients. Spread in a large baking pan. Bake for 10 minutes and stir. Bake for another 10 minutes. While mixture is hot, stir in the additional ingredients. Let cool. Store in an airtight container.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1/2 cup
Servings Per Container 10

Amount Per Serving
Calories 200 Calories from Fat 88

% Daily Value

Total Fat 8g	12%
Saturated Fat 1g	3%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 4g	0%
Total Carbohydrate 22g	7%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%
Sugars 6.5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 4%	Iron 17%

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