

NUTRIFAX[©]

2008

Nutrition and the Student Athlete

Participation in athletics often begins at an early age. In addition to the health benefits associated with physical activity, exercise provides children with personal enjoyment, social interaction, and skill development. Parents and coaches need to consider the special needs of young athletes for training and performance.

DIETARY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUNG ATHLETES

For the school-age child, increased caloric needs for training are best met by planning intake around the new food guide MyPyramid. This encourages consumption of a variety of foods that include all necessary nutrients. The student athlete may need an additional 500 - 1,500 calories depending on frequency, intensity, and duration of activity. The food intake should be distributed over regular periods throughout the day to ensure readily available energy to support training activity.

The student athlete should consume at least the following each day:

- 3 cups milk group
- 5½ oz meat and beans
- 2½ cups vegetables
- 2 cups fruits
- 6 servings grains

FLUID GUIDELINES

Before Activity:

Drink 4 cups 1-2 hours before activity.
Drink 3 cups 10-15 minutes before activity.

During Activity:

Drink at least ½ cup every 20 minutes.

After Activity:

Drink 2 cups for every pound of weight lost.

Important:

Athletes should be encouraged to drink, even when not thirsty. Try to drink at least 8 cups of water each day.

SUPPLEMENTATION

Young athletes can meet their vitamin and mineral needs on diets that include foods and portions recommended in MyPyramid, the new food guide. **Vitamin, mineral, or protein supplements are not recommended for young athletes.**

Energy Boosters (Ergogenic Aids) represent the trendiest area in sports nutrition. Energy producing aids have many athletes believing that they will give them a competitive edge; but many offer no benefits, and some are harmful. **There is no scientific research to back up the claims made for most of these products.** Athletes need to be aware of bogus claims such as "fat burner" and "strength booster". **Be informed and be aware!**

*Food and Nutrition Services
can assist in providing nutrition information.
Call 703-813-4800 and ask for a Registered Dietitian.*

