

Sports Nutrition Laws

“A good diet does not make an average athlete great, but a poor diet can make a great athlete average.”

- Dr. David Costill (Exercise Physiologist)

Life as a student-athlete these days is not easy! High demands are imposed on you both in the classroom and in your sport on a daily basis. As an athlete, it is vital that you pay close attention to your nutritional needs in order to optimize your health and well-being. At the end of the day, it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to look after yourself. Below are 6 nutrition LAWS that I feel are the most important for young athletes.

LAW #1: Eat breakfast daily.

Unfortunately most teenagers leave the house without eating or drinking anything. You can't think without fuel. You cannot physically function well without fuel. Imagine you have an upcoming game - we'll use football as an example. Normally you're on the offensive line. However, this time your coach wants you to play QB. Here's the problem - you've never practiced. You don't know any of the plays. And you can't really throw that well either.

Not eating breakfast and then being asked to “perform” in the classroom and on the field, pool, or court is like being thrown into a position you've never trained for. You'll not function well. You'll not perform like you should. And you may even get hurt. Fuel up for the day by starting off with a smart breakfast.

LAW #2: Get a more sound sleep each night.

All of your hard training and sound nutrition practices mean nothing unless you give your body time to adapt. This happens while you are sleeping. Ideally you should try to get at least 7 hours per night. So...shut off your electronics immediately before going to bed!

LAW #3: Replace the soft, energy and sport drinks with water.

Let's face it, teens drink too much sugar. Liquid calories from soft drinks, energy drinks and sport drinks lead to weight gain and replace healthier food options since these drinks can fill you up. So skip the high sugar drinks and instead pick up a bottle of water. Exception: I only recommend soft/sport drinks for athletes that are involved in a prolonged endurance activity lasting over 1 hour!

LAW #4: Include some protein with each meal and snack.

Most people don't eat enough protein in the morning and afternoon and instead lump it together at dinner. The problem is your muscles continually need protein and all it provides to recover, repair and regrow. So rather than simply pouring some cereal into a bowl, consider some higher protein options - Greek yogurt with that cereal vs. milk, eggs or hard boiled eggs which can be made ahead, or a protein smoothie, with a little protein powder, some fresh or frozen fruit and milk.

LAW #5: Eat more fruits and vegetables.

Fruit and vegetables are packed full of goodness and often contain a number of essential vitamins and minerals that cannot be found in other types of foods or they may contain higher levels of these nutrients than other foods. They play a significant role in human nutrition! Without them you simply cannot maintain healthy tissues such as skin, bone, muscle, blood, etc.

LAW #6: Always plan ahead!

Do you have a nutritional plan prior to, during and after competition? If yes, great! If not, the example below from the Sport Medicine Council of Alberta will help.

Competition Nutrition Strategy

- **Day Prior to Competition**
 - Lots of fluids, grains, vegetables and fruits.
 - No caffeine!
 - No alcohol!
 - Moderate ,meat and alternatives, dairy, fats and fibre.

- **Day of Competition**
 - 2-3 hours prior to competition.
 - 500ml of fluid.
 - Lots of fluids, grains, vegetables and fruits.
 - No caffeine!
 - No alcohol!
 - Moderate ,meat and alternatives, dairy, fats and fibre.
 - 15-20 minutes prior to competition.
 - 250-500 ml water.

- **During the Competition**
 - If less than 45-90 minutes
 - 150-300 ml water every 15-20 minutes.
 - If more than 45-90 minutes
 - 30-60g carbohydrate of a 6-8% carbohydrate solution drink/hour.
 - 150-300 ml sport drink every 15-20 minutes after the first hour.
- **After the Competition**
 - Within 15-30 minutes)
 - Replace fluid lost as sweat during the competition.
 - 500-750 mL fluid for every 1 lb weight loss due to sweat.
 - 1 L fluid = 1 Kg body mass lost.
 - Consume carbohydrate and protein rich foods/fluid. 2 cups of chocolate milk is a great choice!
 - Within 2 hours after training/competition.
 - Well balanced meal following Canada's Food Guide.

There certainly is much more information to consider such as supplement use, optimal body mass, advanced hydration requirements, etc. If you have any questions and/or comments please feel free to forward them to me at psdrolias252@gmail.com or drop by my office in the Fitness Center.

7 High Protein Breakfast Ideas



Canada's Food Guide

