



Rio Rapids Soccer Club
Nutritional Suggestions
and Guidelines

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Sports Nutrition 101

Just like a car needs fuel, the body needs food to keep it running. A balanced diet of carbohydrate, fat, and protein provides the body with the energy it needs for optimal performance. Adequate fluid intake is another key to successful performance

- **Carbohydrate**

- Recommended intake of 1.8-4.5 gm/lb of body weight
- Maintains blood glucose levels
- Replaces muscle glycogen (energy source for play)

- **Fat**

- Recommended intake of 20-30% of total energy intake
- Intake of less than 20% does not benefit performance
- High-fat diets not recommended

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Sports Nutrition 101

- **Protein**
 - Recommended intake of ~ 0.7- 1.0 gm/lb body weight
 - Builds and repairs muscle tissue
 - Helps boost immune system
 - Helps to maintain lean body mass when losing weight
- **The Power of Water**
 - Transports glucose and oxygen to muscles
 - Helps to prevent dehydration
 - Regulates body temperature
 - Aids in digestion of foods

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Nutrition – The Winning Edge

Athletes should choose a variety of nutrient-dense foods from the following food groups.

- **Whole Grains**
 - Provide energy for muscles and prevent muscle fatigue
 - Whole grains and foods high in fiber help regular gastrointestinal tract
 - Aim to make the majority of your grain intake from whole grains like whole wheat pasta, brown rice, whole wheat pita, whole wheat tortillas
- **Vegetables**
 - Provide carbohydrate (some more than others)
 - Many vegetables are sources of phytochemicals
 - Good source of Vitamin C, Vitamin A, and potassium
 - Recommended intake: 2 1/2 cups per day
- **Fruits**
 - Provide carbohydrate
 - Many fruits are sources of phytochemicals
 - Good source of fiber, potassium, and Vitamin C
 - Recommended intake: 1 1/2 cups per day

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- **Milk & Dairy**
 - Provides protein
 - Good source of calcium and Vitamin D
- **Meat & Beans**
 - Provides protein
 - Good source of iron and zinc
 - Recommended intake: varies based on body weight and goals
- **Fats & Oils**
 - A balanced diet is not fat-free as fat is essential for bodily functions
 - Healthy fat adds flavor to the diet
 - Choose healthier fats like fatty fish, nuts, seeds, nut butters and avocados instead of trans and saturated fats (e.g. partially hydrogenated oils like chips, cheese, and fried foods)

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Fuel like a Champion!!!

To eat for strength and power, there are several “Fuel Like a Champion Habits” that are important. Growing bodies adds extra concern to an athlete. It is extremely important to properly feed growing athletes to ensure healthy development. Let’s review each of them below.

- **Fuel Tip #1: Eat every couple hours.** This means dividing up your calories for the day into many (4-6) smaller meals vs. 2-3 large meals. This is a more efficient way to fuel your muscles, keep your energy levels elevated, and limit fat store. After all, the goal is gaining lean body mass.
- **Fuel Tip #2: Include lean protein with each meal.** Protein is necessary for rebuilding, growth, and repair. Protein also helps fill you up. The key is to pick whole food options of lean protein – chicken and turkey breast, eggs, lean red meat, yogurt, cottage cheese, beans, etc. rather than relying on dietary supplements.
- **Fuel Tip #3: Include fruits and vegetables with every single meal.** Yes, fruits and vegetables – they do have nutrients that will help you repair and fuel your muscles and mind.
- **Fuel Tip #4: Eat whole foods, not supplements.** Supplements are just what the name implies – *supplements* to the diet. Whole foods give you much more than just a single nutrient; quality foods have a variety of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and other nutrients that not one single supplement can touch. Although some supplements can have a role in a healthy diet, the key is to eat foods, don’t rely on supplements.

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- **Fuel Tip #5: Plan Ahead.** Sounds like a strange tip for strength and power nutrition, but planning will allow you to accomplish all the other tips. Eating quality foods frequently throughout the day will be impossible without some thought and preparation. Giving some thought to the schedule for the day (school, activities, practice, games, etc.) will provide a way to incorporate the regular feedings to fuel the body.
- **Fuel Tip #6: Eat the widest variety of foods available.** The more varied the diet, the greater the results. The body thrives off of nutrients; giving it what it needs will enhance the results. Include a rainbow of colors daily – include a variety of lean proteins, whole grains, and healthy fats.
- **Fuel Tip #7: Eat to recover.** Training breaks down muscle. Muscle grows during recovery. Fueling the body with the right nutrients will give muscle the best environment to repair and grow.
- **Fuel Tip #8: Focus on Quality, not just Quantity.** American's are overfed, yet undernourished. Increasing calories doesn't simply mean drinking an extra 6-pack of soft drinks each day, or eating candy bars by the dozen. Gaining quality weight can only come from quality foods – whole grains, with at least 3 grams of fiber per serving, lean protein, and healthy fats.

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Fueling on The Go

Student-athletes are notorious for having to eat on the road or being stranded at a complex with limited access to anything but nutritionally poor concession stand food. Use these survival strategies to keep your body in peak performance mode no matter your traveling situation.

- **Roadside Snacks** - Pack these easy items with your travel gear to eat in-between games, clinics, or on the bus/plane for a quick pick-me-up.
 - String cheese
 - Sliced veggies
 - Peanut butter and jelly
 - Energy bar
 - Turkey sandwich
 - Whole grain crackers
 - Fresh or dried fruit
 - Greek yogurt
 - Roasted, unsalted nuts

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Pre-Competition Nutrition

For gold-medal winning performances, it is important to adequately fuel the body before, during, and after competition. Food provides the body with the energy it needs to perform its very best. Just keep in mind that to reach your true potential as an athlete you need to be eating well throughout your training and don't wait until the day before your competition.

“One great pre-event meal cannot make up for a for a poor training diet!”

- **The Role of a Pre-Competition Meal**

- Helps to maintain blood sugar level during exercise
- Settles the stomach and prevents hunger
- Provides carbohydrate for the muscles to use for energy
- Helps the body begin competition in a hydrated state

- **Guidelines for Pre-Competition Meal**

- As time gets closer to the competition decrease the volume of food
- Eat high-carbohydrate, moderate protein, low-fat meal meals prior to competition
- Consume foods your body is used to—competition day is not the time to try new foods! Make sure you have tested during training.
- Limit high-fat and high sugar foods.
- Allow time for food to digest prior to competition
- Drink adequate fluids to stay hydrated

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Game Day Breakfast

You know your body best and you know how much you can handle before an event. Breakfast is an important way to charge the body pre-competition and to prepare it for a full day of work. It is recommended to consume a 200-500 calorie carbohydrate-rich breakfast two to four hours prior to an event. This will help you to have more energy to get through your practices or competition. Try these:

- Whole wheat bagel or toast with peanut butter
- Scrambled eggs and 2 pieces of whole wheat toast
- Smoothie with frozen fruit and milk
- Greek yogurt with fruit
- Oatmeal and scrambled eggs with some berries

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Between Games Meals/Snack

Maintaining optimal energy levels can be tough when you are on a field all weekend. Make sure that you have some quick, high energy snacks to eat between games so you maintain your energy levels. Even when there is a concession stand, it is usually low-quality fuel for athletes so planning ahead and packing these snacks to have on hand is always a good idea!

- Peanut butter and jelly sandwich on whole wheat bread
- Trail mix (for example: raw almonds with dried cranberries)
- Energy bar like a Clif, Nectar, Lara Bar, or Pure Bar
- Fresh fruit – bananas/apples/berries/pears
- Greek yogurt with granola
- Turkey sandwich on whole wheat bread

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Hydration and Sports Drinks/Coconut Water

Whether the sun is sweltering down in the middle of an afternoon game or it is your second practice for the grueling two-a-days for pre-season, hydration is a hugely important and often overlooked factor in these types of situations. Sports drinks or coconut water are critical to replenish fluids and electrolytes lost through sweat. They also provide energy which can help maintain blood sugar levels between meals/snacks. Do not wait until you are thirsty since this means you are already dehydrated.

- Make sure you have a hydration plan and stick to it!
- Drink 16 oz (2 cups) of fluid 2 hours before practice or game.
- Drink 8 oz (1 cup) of fluid 10-20 minutes before practice or game. (In very hot or very cold weather you need 12-20 oz 10-20 minutes prior to practice or game).
- Drink 7-10 oz every 10-20 minutes during exercise.

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Recovery

Recovery is one of the most important aspects of sports nutrition and optimal fueling for an athlete. Consuming the right mix of carbohydrates and protein postgame, practice, or exercise allows the body and its muscles to refuel and be ready for the next practice or game. Recovery is even more important when you have multiple games or practices on the same day. Make sure you drink a recovery beverage within 30 minutes following your workout or game. A great easy option is low fat chocolate milk.

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Why are my muscles cramping?

Muscle cramping may be due to fatigue, but there may be several nutritional factors leading to muscle cramps as well.

- **Lack of fluids:** Dehydration is often a major cause of muscle cramping so it is important to consume adequate fluids.
- **Loss of sodium and potassium:** Sweat and other water loss may lead to electrolyte imbalances which may result in muscle cramping. It is much more common for sodium to be the culprit of muscle cramping than potassium although they are both important electrolytes. Every athlete has their own unique sweat rate and it is important to make sure you are not losing too much sodium as it can negatively impact performance. Obviously, if you aren't in the game playing due to muscle cramps you cannot perform. If you are a heavy sweater you might try to add a little sodium to your diet. You can also eat pretzels
- **Lack of calcium.** Make sure to consume adequate calcium as it plays a key role in muscle contraction..

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Tournament and Multiple Practice Day Eating Strategies

You may feel confident in your ability to practice proper nutrition on a regular basis, but are you prepared for weekend-long tournaments or two-a-days? These situations place extra demands on your body which requires you to pay even more attention to what and when you eat. If you will be competing two days in a row, be sure to prime your body for peak performance with proper nutrition. The best foods to eat the night before a game or tournament should be the same as your goals for every dinner – the key is to make sure it is a meal you are used to eating. And this meal should be made up of whole grains, lean protein, fruits and vegetables. Here is one simple example:

- Whole wheat pasta with marinara sauce, a chicken breast chopped up and added to the pasta, along with a handful of spinach cooked in to the sauce
- Remember to drink plenty of fluids so that on the day of your event you are well hydrated.

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Contact Information

Jessica Gentry, YFS, YNS, HSSCC

9660 Eagle Ranch Rd NW Suite #5

Albuquerque, NM 87114

Contact# - 505/401-0898

jgentry79@gmail.com

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