
NUTRITION INFORMATION FROM YOUR DIETITIAN

Sports Nutrition: Food and injury

Proper nutrition can help reduce your risk of injury and improve healing when injured.

Calories

Calories are a measure of the energy in food – the energy your body needs to function. Carbohydrates (carbs) are the body's main source of energy, but fat and protein also have calories. It's important that you eat enough calories to support your daily activities. If you don't eat enough, your body may become fatigued or start to break down and injury or illness may occur.

Good sources of carbs include:

- Whole grains (wheat, rice, oats)
- Pasta
- Fruit
- Milk

Protein

The body uses protein to build and repair muscles and tissues. Since the body does not store protein, eat small amounts of protein throughout the day instead of large amounts at one time. Eat slightly more protein when recovering from an injury.

Good sources of protein include:

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| • Meats (beef, poultry, fish) | • Beans |
| • Dairy | • Nuts |
| • Eggs | • Soy |

Anti-inflammatory foods

Inflammation (swelling) is part of the body's natural response to injury. However, too much inflammation can have a negative effect on healing and lead to increased pain and even tissue damage. Some foods can help decrease inflammation and speed up recovery.

Foods that help reduce inflammation include:

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| • Avocados | • Olive oil |
| • Fish and seafood | • Garlic |
| • Nuts | • Tart cherries |
| • Seeds | • Grapes |

Vitamins and minerals

Vitamins and minerals are nutrients that help the body develop, grow, heal, and function. Eating a healthy diet is the best way to get all the vitamins and minerals your body needs. Not only are vitamins and minerals essential to good health, some help with the prevention and recovery of injuries.

Iron

Iron is an essential mineral. The body needs iron to make a special protein called hemoglobin [HE-muh-glow-bin]. Hemoglobin is the part of blood that carries oxygen throughout the body. Athletes with low iron levels are more at risk for injury and illness. **Do not take supplements unless under the direction of a physician or sport dietitian.**

Sources of iron include:

- Meat
- Fish
- Eggs
- Iron fortified cereal
- Green vegetables

Vitamin C

Vitamin C is one of 13 essential vitamins. Vitamin C is an antioxidant [an-tie-OX-eh-dent] that helps protect cells from damage and boosts the immune system. Vitamin C also helps the body absorb iron.

Sources of vitamin C include:

Brightly-colored fruits and vegetables

Calcium

Calcium is another essential mineral. Eating the proper amount of calcium may reduce the risk of bone-related injuries. Vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium, making it another important part of bone health.

Sources of calcium include:

- Dairy products
- Green vegetables
- Soy
- Nuts

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