

SportsNutrition

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TOP SPORTS FOODS: Some healthful choices

When you are training hard, juggling exercise with school, work, and social activities *plus* trying to eat healthfully, you may feel frustrated you have no time to eat the proverbial "three square meals" every day. Never-the-less, you *can* maintain a healthful diet. The trick is to eat a variety of wholesome, lowfat foods.

The following list includes foods that you can easily find in a convenience store, sandwich shop or salad bar, or can keep stocked at home. These nourishing choices invest in your health within a moderate to low calorie range. Because not one food is nutritionally complete, you need to choose a variety of foods to get a balance of the vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates and proteins necessary for top performance and good health.

MILK, YOGURT, lowfat or skim

For calcium, protein, riboflavin

Plan to eat lowfat dairy products 3 to 4 times daily to protect bones, reduce risk of developing high blood pressure, and enhance fat loss.

BROCCOLI,

For vitamins A, C, phytochemicals, fiber

One stalk (cooked) offers all the vitamin C you need for a day. Frozen broccoli is easy to prepare and is nutritionally similar to fresh; freezing retains vitamins.

SPINACH

For vitamins A, C, folate, phytochemicals

Add spinach to salads for more nutrients than offered by pale lettuces. Keep frozen spinach stocked at home for a quick dinner vegetable.

PEPPERS, green, red, yellow

For vitamins A, C, phytochemicals

Half a pepper provides the RDA for vitamin C. Add to salads and pizza; snack on raw peppers.

TOMATOES, fresh, sauce, or juice

For vitamins A, C, phytochemicals

Boost intake by adding sliced tomatoes to sandwiches. Choose foods with tomatoes (pizza, pasta, soup).

BAKED POTATO

For vitamin C, carbohydrates, potassium

The potato skin is rich in vitamin C. Eat it! Top potato with a little lite sour cream, or mash it with milk to add moistness with less fat/calories than butter.

ORANGES, GRAPEFRUIT, whole and juice

For vitamin C, folate, carbohydrates, potassium

A great post-exercise recovery food. Orange and grapefruit juice is nutritionally superior to most juices: 8 oz. (fresh or from frozen) provides the RDA for vitamin C.

BANANAS

For vitamin C, carbohydrates, potassium

Prevent over-ripening by storing bananas in the refrigerator. The skin blackens but the fruit is fine. Frozen chunks taste like ice cream--a great snack!

CANTALOUPE, KIWI, BERRIES

For vitamins A, C, phytochemicals

Enjoy these fruits as snacks or a fruit salad with lowfat cottage cheese --perfect for breakfast or lunch.

CHICKEN, TURKEY

For protein

Thigh and leg meat has more iron and zinc than does breast meat, but also a little more fat. Avoid the skin, the fattiest part!

LEAN BEEF

For protein, iron, zinc

Beef is among the best sources of iron and zinc. Avoid fatty meats, i.e., choose a lean roast beef sandwich or a lean burger.

TUNAFISH, SALMON, canned or fresh

For protein, fish oil

The oil in any fish is health protective. Limit your intake of fried fish. Mix tuna with lowfat mayonnaise, when available.

PEANUT BUTTER, NUTS

Although peanut butter and nuts are high fat foods, their fat protects against heart disease. Enjoy peanut butter in sandwiches or with fruit (apples, bananas); snack on nuts, trail mix.

BRAN and WHOLE GRAIN CEREALS, enriched

For fiber, carbohydrates, B-vitamins, iron

Bran is excellent for fiber (to help prevent constipation). Select "fortified" and "enriched" cereals for the most iron. Drink orange juice with cereal to enhance iron absorption.

BAGELS, whole wheat, pumpernickel, rye, whole grain

For fiber, carbohydrates, B-vitamins

Wholesome bagels are preferable to donuts or cake-like muffins. Choose lite cream cheese; spread with jam for extra carbs.

BREADS, ROLLS, preferably whole grain

For carbohydrates, fiber, B-vitamins

Hearty, whole grain breads (rye, whole wheat, multi-grain) are preferable to breads made with refined white flour. Limit butter, margarine, mayonnaise on breads, rolls, sandwiches.

PIZZA, thick crust

For calcium, protein, vitamin A, carbohydrates

Of the popular fast foods, pizza with thick crust, single cheese, and vegetable toppings (*not* pepperoni, sausage!) is preferable to burgers. If the pizza is oily, blot off the grease with a napkin.

POPCORN, air popped

For carbohydrates, fiber

A whole grain, lowfat snack that is preferable to greasy chips. Be cautious of even "lite" popcorn brands; they can be half fat.

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