

ALL ACCESS

HABITS THAT POWER PERFORMANCE

Designed to help student-athletes fuel performance through smart nutrition.

NUTRITION

WINTER 2026

EAT BETTER. PLAY BETTER.

RESEARCH-PROVEN NUTRITION INSIGHTS
FROM DANA WHITE, MS, RDN, ATC.

WHY NUTRITION IS IMPORTANT FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES



Food is Fuel!

Your body needs proper nutrition to perform at its best



Different Rules Apply

Athletes have unique nutritional requirements



Goals Are the Same

Needs vary, but objectives remain consistent



SPORT NUTRITION GOALS



Fuel performance



Find safe + reliable sources



Meet nutrient needs



Prevent injury + illness



Make gains in strength + endurance



Be educated + independent



BEFORE ACTIVITY

Goal: Provide Fuel for Activity

4+ hours: *Complex carbohydrate, protein & fat*

Examples

- Oatmeal (made with milk) with brown sugar & fruit
- Turkey & cheese sandwich with soup or salad
- Salmon with pasta & salad

2-3 hours: *Complex carbohydrate, protein, low fat*

Examples

- Yogurt with granola, fruit & a protein bar
- ½ Peanut butter & jelly sandwich
- Trail mix

1 hr or less: *Easily digestible carbohydrates*

Examples

- Bagel
- Fresh fruit
- Crackers
- Sports drink
- Pretzels



DURING ACTIVITY

Goal: Maintain Energy Levels

Simple Carbohydrate

Examples

- Sports drink (long duration)
- Fresh/dried fruit
- Pretzels
- Crackers
- ½ bagel

Note: Not all athletes tolerate food during activity the same way. Test options during training, never on game day. Consider tolerance.



AFTER ACTIVITY

Goal: Restore Energy & Support Muscle Recovery

SNACK OPTIONS: *Snack of protein & carbohydrate within 30-60 minutes*

Examples

- Smoothie
- Sports drink & protein bar
- Low-fat chocolate milk or protein shake & sandwich

MEAL OPTIONS

Examples

- Rice bowl with chicken, tofu, or steak
- Pasta with meat sauce, salad & milk
- Grilled salmon with baked potato & salad



THE STUDENT-ATHLETE'S PLATE

HARD TRAINING DAY

Two-a-day practices or competition/game day

The image shows a white plate with a circular border divided into four quadrants. The top-left quadrant (orange border) contains a whole roll and a portion of mashed potatoes with bits of meat. The top-right quadrant (orange border) contains a portion of mashed potatoes with bits of meat. The bottom-left quadrant (red border) contains a piece of grilled salmon. The bottom-right quadrant (green border) contains a variety of colorful vegetables including carrots, bell peppers, green beans, and cauliflower. To the right of the plate is a glass of water with ice cubes. The plate is labeled with percentages: 'GRAINS + CARBS 50%' at the top, 'LEAN PROTEIN 25%' on the left, and 'FRUITS + VEGETABLES 25%' on the right.

GRAINS + CARBS 50%

- Pasta
- Rice
- Potatoes
- Cereals
- Breads

LEAN PROTEIN 25%

- Poultry
- Beef/Game/Lamb
- Fish
- Eggs
- Low-Fat Dairy
- Soy (e.g. Tofu, Tempeh)
- Legumes/Nuts*

FRUITS + VEGETABLES 25%

- Fresh Fruit
- Canned Fruit
- Dried Fruit
- Raw Vegetables
- Cooked Vegetables

FATS

- Avocado
- Oils
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Cheese
- Butter

HYDRATION

- Water
- Dairy/Non-Dairy Beverages
- Diluted Juice
- Flavored Beverages (Low/Zero Calorie)
- Coffee/Tea

FLAVORS

- Salt/Pepper
- Herbs
- Spices
- Vinegar
- Salsa
- Mustard
- Ketchup



HYDRATION

The most common cause of fatigue during performance is dehydration.

5 Pro Tips for Staying Hydrated & Fueled

- **Stay on Top of Your Fluids:** *Losing just 2% of your body weight can increase your risk for fatigue, injury, and heat illness. Keep sipping!*
- **Don't Underestimate Mild Dehydration:** *Even a small drop in hydration hurts performance. Drink before you feel thirsty.*
- **Salty Sweaters Need Extra:** *If you sweat a lot, make sure to replace fluids AND electrolytes.*
- **Read Electrolyte Labels:** *Not all electrolyte products are the same—check ingredients and sodium content.*
- **Smart Sodium Snacks:** *Refuel with snacks that contain sodium (pretzels, pickles, nuts, crackers)*



RESEARCH-PROVEN

Expert insight provided by Dana White, MS, RDN, ATC—Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, Certified Athletic Trainer, College & USOC Sports Dietitian, Food Network nutrition expert, and cookbook author.

