SPECIAL OLYMPICS SEMINOLE COUNTY

Workout Zone

The Healthy Eating Edition

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Nutrition And Performance

Nutrition can make or break an athlete's performance, yet it is often the overlooked element. The food an athlete eats is just as important as the time spent training. Follow this guide to make sure you are fueling for top performance.

Protein is what keeps your body healthy under all the strain involved with training and competition. Adequate protein intake accelerates muscle growth and speeds recovery by helping rebuild muscle fibers stressed during a workout. Athletes who get insufficient amounts of protein are at a higher risk of injury.

Lean meats and other animal products, like eggs, milk, and whey (a by-product of milk), pack a lot of protein. Four ounces of chicken breast, for example, contain about 32 grams of protein. The fat in food interferes with the rate of protein absorption, so limit your intake of high-fat foods, such as rib eye or prime rib. Not all the protein in a food is easily absorbed by your body, but you'll probably get enough as long as you eat a lot of different kinds of food.

Carbohydrates are the fuel our body needs. You've always known carbs are your muscles' best fuel and without enough you will not have the energy needed to have a great workout. But not all carbs are created equal. Some will give you a boost of energy while others can wipe you out. What's best? Read on to learn how to make carbs work for you.

Carbs are categorized as either **simple** or **complex.** Simple carbs are mainly found in the sugars that we eat—fruit and table sugar. Complex carbs such as starch and fiber are found in grains and plants. We should try to limit the amount of simple carbs we eat because a diet high in sugar can lead to diabetes and other related diseases.

Understanding the Glycemic Index… ***CONTINUED ON PAGE 2***

Nutrition and Performance…. continued

Understanding the Glycemic Index

The glycemic index (GI) ranks carbohydrate foods by their effect on blood glucose levels. High GI foods like corn flakes and graham crackers elicit a greater increase in blood glucose--making more energy available to your muscles more quickly -- than low GI foods such as apples, beans and yogurt. People with diabetes need to eat foods with a low GI to avoid the danger of too much sugar in their blood.

An athlete can fine-tune their GI food intake by following the recommended guidelines—

Eat low GI foods before exercise to provide a more sustained energy release. Moderate to high GI foods are best during and post-exercise for immediate repletion of glycogen.

Before: apples, plums, cherries, peanut butter, milk, yogurt
During: grapes, sports drinks and gels

What is Metabolism and How Does it Affect You?

What is Metabolism? Metabolism is the amount of energy (calories) your body burns to maintain itself. Whether you are eating, drinking, sleeping, cleaning etc... your body is constantly burning calories to keep you going. The more calories you burn the easier it is to keep that unwanted weight off.

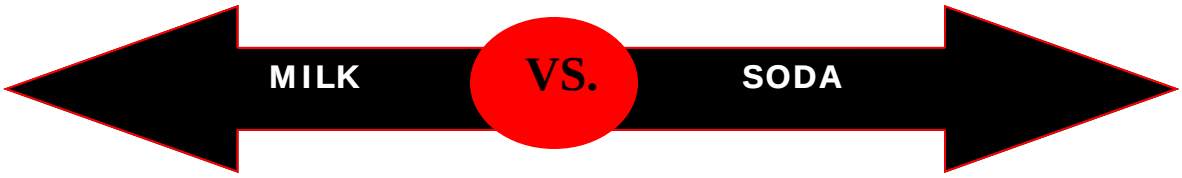
Metabolism is affected by your body composition. By body composition, I mean the amount of muscle you have versus the amount of fat. Muscle uses more calories to maintain itself than fat. People who are more muscular (and have a lower percentage of body fat) are said to have a higher metabolism than others that are less muscular.

How can you increase your metabolism? Begin to exercise and stop dieting. You can increase your muscle mass by doing some type of resistance work (i.e. lifting weights, using exertubes, rubberbands, hand weights etc...). You can also decrease your level of body fat by doing some type of aerobic exercise at least 3 days a week for longer than 20 minutes. By aerobic exercise, I mean an activity (such as walking, jogging, step aerobics, hi/low aerobics, biking, swimming etc...) that will increase your heartrate into the **target zone** (refer to the September issue for a chart on your Target Heart Rate) and keep it there for the duration of the exercise session. You also need to eat! - Do not diet, just watch the types of foods you eat. Try to eat a diet that is lower in fat (check the labels on the foods that you buy).

Your best bet for keeping metabolism revved:
Build muscles, snack on low-calorie, high-protein foods, and keep moving!

Beverage Breakdown

You may not think twice about what you slurp through your straw or pour into your glass each day. It's easy to overlook the liquid portion of your meals and snacks. But what you sip might slip you up if you're choosing lots of empty-calorie, sugar-laden drinks. See how soda stacks up against milk.



1% Lowfat Milk (8 ounce glass)		Regular Soda (12 ounce can)
		
103	calories	151
2	fat	0
107	sodium	15
366	potassium	11
13	carbohydrates	39
13	sugars	39
8	protein	0
478	vitamin A	0
290	calcium	80
127	vitamin D	0

Eat Your Way to Five a Day

You have always been told to eat your fruits and vegetables, and for a very good reason. Fruits and vegetables contain carbohydrates, vitamins A and C, and folic acid to keep eyes, skin and blood healthy. Fruits and vegetables are also thought to help us prevent many diseases. They add color to your plate and a good flavor to your meal. That is why we all need to eat "five a day": three servings of vegetables and two servings of fruits each day. So, take the challenge to eat your five every day!

What is a Serving of a Fruit or Vegetable

- 1 piece of fresh fruit
- one small glass (6 oz. or 3/4 cup) 100% juice
- 1/2 cup cut vegetables
- 1 cup leafy vegetables
- one handful (1/4 cup) dried fruit
- 1/2 cup dried peas or beans

Eating Tips for Eating Your 5 a Day

- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables at every meal.
- Eat at least one vitamin A rich fruit or vegetable, such as cantaloupe, carrots, sweet potato, spinach, or broccoli every day.
- Eat at least one vitamin C rich fruit or vegetable, such as grapefruit, oranges, green pepper, or cauliflower every day.
- Eat at least one high fiber fruit or vegetable, such as apples, grapefruit, or broccoli, every day.
- Eat cabbage family vegetables, such as broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, and cabbage, several times each week.
- Start the morning off with a glass of 100% fruit juice.
- Eat a large salad at lunch.
- For a morning snack eat a piece of fresh fruit, such as a banana, apple, orange, pear, grapes, etc.
- For an afternoon snack munch on carrot and celery sticks or mini-peeled carrots.
- For dinner eat a dark green vegetable, such as broccoli or spinach, etc.