



# Nutritional Guide

**for Adolescent Athletes**



Dartmouth-Hitchcock  
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL  
AT DARTMOUTH

# Dietary Recommendations

## Eat carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are the fuel source for your body. Choose complex carbohydrates like whole grains, oatmeal, air popped popcorn, and 100% whole wheat bread. Fresh fruits and vegetables are also good sources of complex carbohydrates.

## Drink plenty of fluids

Drink plenty of fluids every day. Current guidelines say to let your thirst be your guide, but most people confuse thirst and hunger. Try to drink eight 8-ounce glasses of water each day.

Follow fluid replacement guidelines for athletic events. Be sure you are hydrated before an event and replace fluids every 15 minutes during the event. Plus, be sure to replace fluids from sweat loss when you are done. See a registered dietitian to develop a personalized hydration plan.



## Snack between meals to increase calories

As an athlete you are burning a lot of fuel when training and competing. In order to maintain muscle mass, you need to consume enough calories to run your body so that it does not use your muscles as a fuel source.



## Stay away from unnecessary nutritional supplements

Your body is made to eat food. Whole foods contain vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients, and fiber. When you rely on supplements you do not get the benefit of “food synergy” - the interactions of the many individual components of food.

## Don't skip meals

Your day is busy and it may seem like a good idea to get “extra” time by not eating. However, your body needs a constant, consistent supply of fuel, especially with the extra demands of training and competing. Missing meals means missing an opportunity to build lean muscle for strength.

## Stay clear of fad diets

Fad diets are not nutritionally sound and are easy to spot. They are the diets that recommend eliminating a food or food group, severely restrict calorie intake, or make claims that you can lose a lot of weight very fast. These types of diets do not work because they are hard to follow, they can add stress to the body, and by eliminating a food or food group you are not taking in important nutrients that your body needs to function at its best. You could actually be doing more harm than good.

## Do not try to lose weight while training

When you are training your body needs a lot of fuel to have the energy to be able to make it through practice, build and repair muscle, and to continue to grow and function. By restricting calories your body will detect that there is not enough fuel to be able to do all of this. Your body will decide what is more important (normal body functioning) and will shift the available energy to that rather than to enhancing your performance.



## Compare After Exercise Meals

Which one will satisfy your hunger after exercise?  
Which one keeps money in your pocket?

After Exercise Meal	Calories	Protein	Cost
Banana	105	1g	\$0.18
Graham crackers	130	2g	\$0.13
Peanut butter	180	7g	\$0.12
Low fat chocolate milk	316	16g	\$1.59
<i>Total</i>	<i>731</i>	<i>26g</i>	<i>\$2.02</i>
Protein recovery drink	130	14g	\$1.48
Protein bar	240	9g	\$0.88
<i>Total</i>	<i>370</i>	<i>23g</i>	<i>\$2.36</i>

## Compare Protein Supplements

	DPM 4 lbs	P90X 4 lbs
Availability	Grocery store	Must order online or go to a specialty store
Cost of a container	\$15.99	\$56.90
Number of servings per container	45 (40g = 3 Tbsp. = 1 serving)	25 (2 scoops = 1 serving)
Cost per serving	\$0.36	\$2.28
Amount of protein per serving	14.5g	10g
Type of protein	Whey	Whey
How to use	Add to milk Add to pudding or yogurt Add to mashed potato Add to foods when cooking	Must use as directed

## What should I drink?

### Water

### Electrolyte replacement

Regular daily activities	Moderate/intense exercise longer than 1 hour
Warm/hot day	Exercising in extreme heat
Light/moderate exercise	Extreme sweat/sodium loss

# Shopping for Health and Budget

*Here are ways to shop and save money while purchasing healthy choices that are good for you and your family.*

## Bread

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- ♥ Always buy 100% whole grain.
- 💰 Stock up and freeze when items go on sale.

## Canned Goods

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- ♥ Try to choose items that say no added salt or reduced sodium.
- 💰 Store brands, when on sale, are the best value - stock up when you see them!

## Cereal

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- ♥ Oatmeal is one of the healthiest choices because it is a whole grain and has no added salt, fat or sugar (ditto for shredded wheat).
- 💰 Stock up when items are on sale.
- 💰 Even though grits are not a whole grain, they are economical and low in calorie density.

## Pasta

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- ♥ Rice is a very inexpensive option that is also low in calorie density when cooked. Of course brown is best but white is not such a bad option either if that is all your family will eat.
- 💰 Look for sales on store brands and stock up when prices are low.



## Produce

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- ♥ The food pyramid calls for most people to eat about 4.5 cups of fruits and veggies each day.
- 💰 Farmer's markets and local stands often have the best prices.
- 💰 Watch local papers for grocery stores offering sales on produce - you can get some great deals.
- 💰 Use items in season to get the best value and for a little change of pace throughout the year.
- 💰 Don't buy too much at once unless you plan to use it before it spoils. An exception might be if you plan to cook and freeze soups or other dishes.

## Protein

- ♥ Choose lean, cook lean and use portion control.
- 💰 One word helps here - sale!
- 💰 Use smaller quantities and fill in with veggies, fruits or pasta.
- 💰 ♥ The cheapest protein item is also the healthiest and highest in fiber - beans.
- 💰 ♥ If you don't have a lot of time use lentils.
- 💰 ♥ If you do have some time, consider cooking and freezing larger batches of dried beans.

## Tips to avoid common pitfalls

- Avoid filling your cart with expensive and unhealthy items like soda, chips, cereals, cookies, crackers, and convenience meals. These choices are calorie dense. Try to limit these treats to just one per week.
- Always shop with a list.
- Avoid shopping when you're hungry - you'll end up buying things you don't need.
- Try to shop without other family members as they often will throw things in the cart that are not needed.

## Quick Savings Checklist

- ✔ Look for store brands
- ✔ If healthy items are on sale, stock up!
- ✔ Compare unit pricing
- ✔ Stick to your shopping list
- ✔ Use less meat, soda, cookies, crackers, chips, deli, bakery and convenience items

For a personal nutrition consultation, contact a dietitian near you.  
See our team at: [patients.dartmouth-hitchcock.org/dietitians](https://patients.dartmouth-hitchcock.org/dietitians)