



Nutrition for Student Performance

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Jen works with ICyF to provide expert advice on sports nutrition and healthy eating to the students and families of Indianola. As a board-certified sports dietitian, Jen owns a private practice that focuses on helping athletes stay on the cutting edge with superior nutrition to enhance performance with safety and efficacy.

What you eat (and drink) matters when it comes to the classroom, labs, band practice or chorus. Without proper hydration and nutrition, you will be left with a sub-par performance. Let the following guidelines be your Cliffsnotes to nutrition success.

Focus on Nutrient Dense Carbohydrates.

You may not need as many carbohydrates as students participating in high demand physically active sports but carbohydrates are still essential for you. Your brain (and body) relies on glucose, a type of sugar for energy. The way you deliver glucose to your brain and body is by consuming healthy carbohydrates. When carbohydrates are consumed, select those that are going to offer the most nutrition. Limit starchy, high sugar carbohydrates that can cause inflammation and unstable blood sugar levels. Carbohydrate consumed with some protein at every meal and snack will allow for a consistent release of energy and brain power throughout the day.

Carbohydrate choice	Better carbohydrate choice	Protein Option
bagel	Whole grain wrap, English muffin or flat bread	Topped with Rotisserie chicken, lettuce and choice of sauce
rice	quinoa	Mix with black beans and vegetables or for breakfast you can mix warm peanut butter and honey instead of oatmeal
100 % orange juice	orange	1-2 ounces almonds or pistachios
Pop - Tart®	Rx bar®	with Babybel® or string cheese
Soda/sports drink	100% pineapple juice with 0g sugar added	½ cup lowfat cottage cheese topped with cinnamon
candy bar	Low sugar granola bar	8 ounce Greek yogurt or milk
French fries/ potato chips	baked tortilla chips, crunchy veggies	Tuna packet mixed with light mayo
white pasta	Whole grain pasta or Barilla® protein added pasta	Can add ground beef or turkey and red sauce.
Buttery crackers	Pretzel thins	Dipped in hummus
Sugary cereal	Oatmeal	Mix in a scoop of protein powder

***Additional healthy carbohydrate and protein options are found on ICyF “Athlete Shopping List” guide.**



Eat Plenty of Lean Protein

Eat enough protein to keep yourself feeling satisfied, keep your mind alert and be able to continue with ideal growth and development. As mentioned earlier, carbohydrates are the main fuel source for your brain and muscles but its protein that will balance out your metabolism. Lean protein sources you should include; fat free and low fat dairy products, lean meat, beans, seafood, FDA regulated protein powder, eggs, nuts, seeds, quinoa and some plant-protein enhanced grains. For a more detailed list see the ICYP “Athlete Shopping List.” Most high school students can consume 1 gram of protein per kilogram of bodyweight and no more than 1 gram of protein per pound of bodyweight each day.

Weight (pounds)	Daily Protein Range (grams)
140	64 - 120
150	68 - 130
165	75 - 150
180	81 - 160
200	90 - 180

Hydrate

Look after fluid needs. Even a 2% decrease in body weight may affect cognitive performance. Many times, you can lose that amount of weight overnight so drinking water upon waking up is critical. I advise drinking 8-12 ounces. Sip small amounts of fluid during the school day and evening. Always carry a water bottle with you. One sip of water is equal to about 1 ounce. Most students should be consuming 80- 100 ounces of water daily.

Eat Breakfast

You must eat breakfast daily to wake up your metabolism AND your brain. If you skip breakfast, you risk dehydration, low energy and blood sugar levels and you risk a sub optimal performance in the classroom and in your “specials.” A healthy breakfast should consist of whole grains which are high in B vitamins that help to unlock your body’s natural energy and protein to keep you satisfied longer. Breakfast is also a great time to get some fruit, low-fat dairy or even veggies!

Breakfast of a Champion Blueprint

1-2 servings whole grain

1 serving fruit

1-2 servings protein

1 serving low-fat dairy/dairy substitute

- Tortilla spread with peanut butter and wrapped around a banana with 1 cup milk/milk sub.
- Frozen Breakfast Burrito* with grapes and yogurt
- Greek yogurt topped with fresh berries and whole grain English muffin, toasted with no sugar added jam
- High protein oatmeal (Kashi Go Lean®) made with milk. Add in dried fruit.
- Mix peanut butter, honey and raisins into 1 cup cooked quinoa. Drink with 1 cup milk/milk sub.
- Toss dried fruit and a handful of nuts in with air-popped popcorn. Have with yogurt.
- Toast two whole grain waffles and top with Nutella and sliced banana, have with 1 cup milk/milk sub and 1 piece string cheese
- 1 cup of cottage cheese with sliced pineapple, 1 mini bagel with light cream cheese and 1 cup calcium fortified orange juice



- 2 hard-boiled eggs, whole grain granola bar with an apple and 16 ounces low-fat chocolate milk/milk sub
- Smoothie: Juice Plus+® protein powder with 1 cup milk of choice, frozen fruit, baby spinach

* Accepted brands include GOOD Food Made SIMPLE and evol. Or make your own and freeze.

NOTE: A balanced diet with proper macro and micronutrient intake is key for precision-sport athletes to perform their best. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Jen DeWall RDN, CSSD, LD to schedule a complimentary 15-minute sports nutrition coaching call.

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