

NUTRITION IDEAS FOR WRESTLERS

EATING HEALTHY EVERY DAY

Due to concerns about weight control, some wrestlers choose to skip meals or excessively restrict their daily food intake. Those practices can be detrimental to their health, as well as academic and athletic performance. **In order to maintain the high energy levels needed for their intense workouts, wrestlers need to eat a healthy, balanced diet on a daily basis.** If wrestlers make food choices that are high in carbohydrate, low in fat, with moderate amounts of protein, they will be able to eat a healthy, balanced diet without the need to be overly concerned about weight.

Carbohydrates can be in the form of “complex” carbohydrates or “simple” carbohydrates. **Complex carbohydrates are found in breads, grains, and cereals. Simple carbohydrates come from foods containing refined sugar such as pop and candy, and from foods containing natural sugars such as fruit. Getting sugar from natural sources, such as fruit, is preferable to candy and pop because it will satisfy one’s sweet tooth while providing the body with nutrients and fluid at the same time.** Energy from carbohydrates is converted into glucose. Glucose provides immediate, short-term energy. Unused glucose is converted into glycogen and stored in the muscles or liver, or converted to fat and stored as fat tissue. A variety of high carbohydrate foods must be eaten every day to ensure one is getting a variety nutrients necessary for peak performance.

Wrestlers should understand **it is impossible and undesirable to eliminate all fat from one’s diet.** While excessive fat is unneeded and contributes greatly to weight gain or the difficulty in losing weight, **fat is needed for many of the body’s processes which are essential to athletes.** Fat content in foods can occur because of naturally occurring fat or fat that is added. By eliminating excess fat, but not eliminating all foods containing fat, a wrestler can maintain or lose weight while still being healthy.

The following practical ideas for high carbohydrate, low-fat, moderate protein foods are provided to assist wrestlers, their parents and coaches in choosing appropriate foods.

BREAKFAST IDEAS

Drink at least one 6-ounce glass of your favorite juice

Drink at least one 8-ounce glass of water

Bagel, English muffin, or whole-wheat toast spread with peanut butter and topped with a sliced banana, or jam

Bowl of cold or hot cereal with low-fat milk, topped with fresh fruit

English muffin, or whole-wheat toast spread with jam

French toast, pancakes, or waffles topped with low-fat yogurt, applesauce, syrup, or jam

Fresh or canned fruit
Homemade milkshakes made with low-fat milk, low-fat yogurt, and fruit
Leftover vegetable pizza
Poached egg
Stir cold breakfast cereal into low-fat yogurt

LUNCH IDEAS

Drink at least one 8-ounce glass of water

Drink at least one 8-ounce glass of low-fat milk

Whole-wheat or pita bread with turkey, chicken, lean roast beef, or lean ham, and Swiss cheese, and vegetables. (Tomatoes, green peppers, lettuce, cucumbers, onions, and sprouts are all great!)

Tuna or chicken salad sandwich with low-fat mayonnaise.

Baked potato topped with low-fat sour cream, mozzarella cheese, salsa, or skim milk

Vegetable pizza

English muffin topped with pizza sauce and melted cheese

Chicken noodle soup

Fresh fruit

Graham crackers

Vanilla wafer

Pudding made with low-fat milk

Low-fat yogurt

Always include at least one serving of vegetables and fruit with lunch

DINNER IDEAS

Drink at least one, 8-ounce glass of water

Drink at least one, 8-ounce glass of low-fat milk

Baked potato with low-fat topping

Baked turkey, white meat without skin

Bread, muffins, or rolls

Broiled chicken, white meat without skin

Brown or white rice

Cooked vegetables

Fruit

Instant pudding made with low-fat milk

Lean beef or pork

Oriental stir fries with rice

Pasta with tomato sauce or low-fat meat sauce

Tortillas with low-fat refried beans and salsa

Tuna-noodle casserole made with water packed tuna

SNACK IDEAS

Drink at least 1 8-ounce glass of water with your snack.

Air popped popcorn	Low-fat yogurt
Animal crackers	Low-fat pudding cups
Bagels	Low-fat fruit bars
Baked snack crackers and cheese	Oatmeal cookies
Blueberry muffins	Peanut butter and jelly sandwich
Chicken or turkey sandwich with low-fat mayonnaise	Pretzels
Fresh fruit	Pudding pops
Fruit Newtons	String cheese
Fruit bread	Vanilla wafers
Fruit bars	Vegetables and dip
Ice milk or frozen yogurt	

HELPFUL FOOD & CALORIE SUGGESTIONS

Meats: The following meats are low in fat and have approximately **120-150 calories, per 3 ounce serving.**

Fish
Lean roast beef
Lean ham
Lean ground beef - (Rinse ground beef to reduce the fat content)
Skinless, white chicken
Skinless, white turkey
Water-packed tuna

When cooking meat, it should be broiled, baked, or grilled to keep the fat content to a minimum. Choosing leaner cuts of meat will help in keeping the fat content low.

Breads: The following breads have approximately **50-100 calories per serving.**

1 biscuit	5 saltine cracker squares
1 slice bread	1-6" corn tortilla
½ English muffin	1-4" pancake
½ hamburger or hot dog bun	1-4" waffle
1 dinner roll	

Adding butter, mayonnaise, or margarine greatly increases the calorie content.
Honey, jam, or low-fat peanut butter are a better choice.

Calorie content of various spreads:

Butter (hard) - 34 calories per teaspoon	Margarine - 34 calories per teaspoon
Butter (whipped) - 27 calories per teaspoon	Mayonnaise - 33 calories per teaspoon
Catsup - 10 calories per teaspoon	Mustard - 4 calories per teaspoon
Honey - 21 calories per teaspoon	Peanut butter - 31 calories per teaspoon
Jelly/jam - 17 calories per teaspoon	

Fruits and vegetables vary greatly in calories, but they are all **low in calories compared to most other foods**. They are also fat free, with the exception of avocados, unless they are topped with margarine, butter, or high calorie dressings. They are very high in nutrients.

HEALTHY CHOICES WHEN EATING OUT:

Baked potato with low-fat toppings
Bean or chicken burrito
Cheese or vegetable pizza
Chicken sandwich, with low-fat mayonnaise, barbecue sauce, or honey mustard
Chili
Roast beef sandwich
Side salad with low-fat dressing
Skim Milk
(Refer to the fast food handout for additional ideas.)

BEST FOOD CHOICES FROM CONVENIENCE STORES:

Animal crackers	Low-fat chocolate milk
Fruit	Low-fat bean burrito
Fruit bars (ie. Fig bars)	Nutri Grain bars
Granola bar (not chocolate covered)	Pretzels
Juice boxes	String cheese
Low-fat yogurt	V-8 juice

Sources: Berning, Jackie & Coleman, Ellen, Professional Presentations, various dates; Diet, Exercise, & Fitness, Coleman, Ellen, MA, MPH, RD, 1990; Food Power, National Dairy Council, 1991; Health and Safety Considerations for Interscholastic Wrestling, Ohio High School Athletic Association & Ohio Wrestling Coaches Association, 1994; Nutrition Education Instructional Materials, Michigan Weight Monitoring Program, 1996; Nutrition and Sport Success, United States Olympic Committee & Swanson Center for Nutrition, Inc., 1990; Pinning Down Your Optimal Weight: A wrestler's Guide to Good Nutrition, Ricci, Marilyn, MS, RD, 1991; The Wrestler's Diet: A Guide to Healthy Weight Control, Landry, Roger, Oppliger, Robert, Shelter, Ann, & Landry, Greg, 1991.

Special thanks to Molly Pelzer, RD, LD from Dairy Council for providing ideas and reviewing this material.

LOW-FAT MENU IDEAS FOR WRESTLERS (Serving sizes indicate one serving from that food group)

	<u>Milk</u>	<u>Meat</u>	<u>Vegetable</u>	<u>Fruit</u>	<u>Grain</u>
Breakfast	<i>Choose 1</i> 8 oz. low-fat milk 1 slice Swiss/Amer. cheese 8 oz. Low-fat choc. milk Leftover cheese pizza 8 oz. low-fat milkshake 8 oz. low-fat yogurt 8 oz, blended milk/fruit beverage (equals 1 milk + 1 fruit) 1 oz. Swiss, cheddar, Monterey Jack, Colby cheese	<i>Choose 0-1</i> 4 oz. peanut butter Poached egg	<i>Choose 0-1</i> 6 oz. tomato juice 6 oz. V-8 juice	<i>Choose 1</i> 6 oz. fruit juice 1 cup raw fruit 1 piece fruit ½ cup canned fruit	<i>Choose 2-4</i> 1 bowl cold cereal ½ Bagel ½ English muffin 4" Pancake 4" Waffle 1 slice whole wheat toast 1 slice cheese pizza ½ cup hot cereal
Lunch	<i>Choose 1</i> 8 oz. low-fat yogurt 8 oz. low-fat milk 1 slice Swiss/Amer. cheese 8 oz. low-fat choc. milk ½ cup ice milk 1 oz. Swiss, cheddar, Monterey Jack, Colby cheese	<i>Choose 1</i> 3 oz. water packed tuna 3 oz. roast pork 3 oz. Lean roast beef 3 oz. lean ham 3 oz. chicken or turkey (skinless) 3 oz. broiled/baked fish	<i>Choose 1-2</i> ½ cup canned veg. 1 cup raw veggies 1 med. baked potato ½ cup mashed potato 6 baby carrots Spaghetti sauce	<i>Choose 1</i> 6 oz. fruit juice 1 piece fruit 1 cup raw fruit ½ cup canned fruit	<i>Choose 2-4</i> 1 slice bread pita bread ½ hot dog or hamburger bun 1 dinner roll 5 saltine crackers 1 - 6" flour tortilla ½ cup pasta
Snack	<i>Choose 1</i> Yogurt 8 oz. low-fat milk 1 slice Swiss/Amer. Cheese 8 oz. low-fat choc. milk ½ cup ice milk 1 oz. Swiss, cheddar, Monterey Jack, Colby cheese	<i>Choose 1</i> 4 oz. peanut butter 3 oz. lean ham 3 oz. chicken or turkey (skinless) 3 oz. water packed tuna	<i>Choose 1</i> 6 oz. tomato juice 6 oz. V-8 juice 6 baby carrots 1 baked potato	<i>Choose 0-1</i> 6 oz. fruit juice 1 piece fruit 1 cup raw fruit ½ cup canned fruit	<i>Choose 2-4</i> ½ English muffin ½ bagel 1 slice whole wheat toast 5 saltine crackers 1 - 6" tortilla 1 bowl cold cereal
Supper	<i>Choose 1</i> 8 oz. low-fat yogurt 8 oz. low-fat milk 1 slice Swiss/Amer. cheese 8 oz. low-fat choc. milk ½ cup ice milk 1 oz. Swiss, cheddar, Monterey Jack, Colby cheese	<i>Choose 1</i> 3 oz. water packed tuna 3 oz. Lean roast beef 3 oz. lean ham 3 oz. chicken or turkey (skinless) 3 oz. broiled/baked fish 3 oz. roast pork	<i>Choose 1-2</i> ½ cup canned veg. 1 cup raw veggies 1 med. baked potato ½ cup mashed potato 6 baby carrots Spaghetti sauce	<i>Choose 0-1</i> 6 oz. fruit juice 1 piece fruit 1 cup raw fruit ½ cup canned fruit	<i>Choose 2-4</i> 1 slice bread/pita bread 1 - 6" flour tortilla ½ hot dog/hamburger bun 5 saltine crackers 1 dinner roll 3 slices veggie pizza (equals 1 milk, 1 veggie, 3 grains) ½ cup pasta
TOTAL SERVINGS	4	3+	3-6	2-4	8-16

NOTE: To maintain hydration drink at least one, 8-ounce glass of water with each meal and snack.

NUTRITION IDEAS FOR WRESTLERS

PRE-COMPETITION MEALS

Wrestlers may not often think about pre-competition meals because of early morning weigh-ins. After they have “made weight,” they often eat anything that is available and worry about the consequences later! By following these guidelines and those in “*EATING HEALTHY EVERY DAY*” wrestlers will find it easier to fuel their performance and control their weight.

*Here are some **basic guidelines for eating before competition.***

Avoid foods high in salt as they cause water to leave the muscles where it is needed it to aid performance.

Drink at least two, 8-ounce glasses of water with your meal.

Eat 3 - 4 hours before competing.

Eat familiar foods that will not cause indigestion.

Eat foods that are high in carbohydrate and low in fat and protein.

Keep the pre-competition meal small.

Food ideas for after weigh-in:

Drink at least one 8-ounce glass of water

Bagels, English muffins, or toast topped with peanut butter and jelly or fruit

Cold or hot cereal with low-fat milk

Fresh fruit

Fruit juice

Low-fat yogurt

Pancakes topped with fruit

Waffles topped with fruit & low-fat whipped topping

Ideas for pre-competition meals:

Drink at least one 8-ounce glass of water

Baked potato topped with salsa or other low-fat topping

Bread, muffins, rolls topped with honey, jam or other low-fat topping

Broiled fish

Cooked vegetables

Fresh or canned fruit

Fruit juice, unsweetened

Lettuce salad with low-fat dressing

Low-fat milk

Pasta without meat sauce

Rice, white or brown

Skinless, white chicken or turkey

Any breakfast ideas are also excellent choices for pre-game.

POST-COMPETITION MEALS

It normally takes your body 24 - 72 hours (1-3 days) to convert complex carbohydrates into useable forms of energy. ***Eating a high carbohydrate meal 15-30 minutes after exercise, and definitely within 1 hour after exercise, can reduce the amount of time needed to convert carbohydrates into useable glycogen to as little as 12 hours (½ day).***

Foods and drinks to consider as post-competition, or post-practice, snacks are:

Bananas
Fresh fruit
Fruit juices
Oranges
Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches
Sports drinks
Carnation Instant Breakfast

If an athlete chooses to drink only fluids immediately after exercise, a high carbohydrate sports drink, may be the best choice. These drinks are not high protein “weight gainers,” but high carbohydrate supplements. A high carbohydrate meal should be consumed within two hours of competition.

Following competition, avoid foods high in fat and sodium as both will cause weight gain over the next few days due to water retention.

Sources: Berning, Jackie & Coleman, Ellen, Professional Presentations, various dates; The PreCompetition Meal, U.S. Olympic Committee Sports Medicine Division, 1993; “Meals and the Timing of Competition,” Stamford, Bryant, The Physician and Sports Medicine, date unknown; Nutrition Education Instructional Materials, Michigan Weight Monitoring Program, 1996.

Special thanks to Molly Pelzer, RD, LD from Dairy Council for providing ideas and reviewing this material.

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NUTRITION IDEAS FOR WRESTLERS

THE “BEST” BEVERAGES

Every day our body loses about 10, 8-ounce cups of water through normal body functions. These ten cups do not include what we lose through sweat during exercise! To maintain optimal performance, it is essential to replace the water that is lost.

The advantages and disadvantages of replacing fluids by drinking various beverages are listed below. The beverages are also ranked in order of preference, with **water being the beverage of choice**. With the exception of water, beverages consumed should contain nutrients (vitamins and minerals) the body needs for performance.

Beverages consumed within an hour prior to exercise, or during exercise, should not contain more than a small amount of sugar and should always be caffeine-free.

WATER

The most essential nutrient for athletes.
Is necessary to release energy from other nutrients.
Should always be readily available.
Sugar and fat free.

SPORTS DRINKS - ***should contain no more than 70 calories per 8-ounce serving***

Designed for events lasting more than one hour in duration.
Electrolytes from sports drinks may be needed during times of excessive fluid loss or during two-a-day practices.
May cause more fluid to stay in the muscles during exercise.
Most contain the optimal amount of sugar for use during exercise, no dilution necessary.
Taste may cause people to drink more than they would with plain water.

UNSWEETENED FRUIT JUICE

Apple, orange, and cranberry juices are highest in sugar and should be avoided within one hour of exercise.
Provides many nutrients.
Sugar content should be diluted if used within one hour prior to exercise, or during exercise.

MILK

Good source of carbohydrates, calcium, and other nutrients.
Great beverage for pre-competition meal, 3 - 4 hours prior to competition.
Milk does not cause cotton mouth.

POP

Carbonation may cause stomach upset in some athletes.

Contains no nutrients.

Even diet, caffeine-free pop has many added substances that need to be digested which may slow the rate of fluid absorption by the body.

May contain caffeine which increases urine loss & risk of dehydration.

Regular pop contains high amounts of sugar.

NOTE: An athlete should drink *at least* 10, eight ounce cups of these beverages each day!

Sources: Berning, Jackie, Sports Nutritionist. Castle Rock, Colorado; Clark, Nancy, M.S., R.D. The Athlete's Kitchen, New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1986; Coleman, Ellen, R.D., M.A., M.P.H. Program Director: Riverside Cardiac Fitness Center, Riverside, California; Coleman, Ellen. "Sports Drink Update," Sports Science Exchange, Volume 1, Number 5, 1988; Food Power, National Dairy Council, Inc., 1991; Journal of The American Dietetic Association, Volume 86, Number 8, August, 1986; Nutrition Education Instructional Materials, Michigan Weight Monitoring Program, 1996; Shockey, Gayle, L., M.P.H., R.D. "Hydration and Health: Meeting Athletes' Fluids Needs," Sportscare and Fitness, July/August, 1988; "Sports Drinks: Adjusting for the Flavor Factor," The First Aider, Summer, 1991; Tribble, Evelyn. "An Update on Sports Drinks," American Coach, July/August, 1988.

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ALL-DAY TOURNAMENT NUTRITION

During all-day tournaments it is important to stay energized throughout the entire day without feeling “weighted down.” That necessitates athletes “grazing” throughout the day by eating, and drinking, small amounts frequently. It is extremely important for athletes to drink an adequate amount of fluids during a tournament. Energy and fluid needs can be met by drinking juices and sports drinks. Energy needs can also be met by eating easily digested foods that are also high in complex carbohydrates.

Time period between events:

1 hour, or less

1 - 2 hours

2 - 3 hours

3 - 4 hours

4 hours, or more

Best foods to eat:

Water or sports drinks containing no more than 70 calories per 8 ounce serving.

Water, sports drinks, unsweetened fruit juices, vegetable juice, fruit such as apples, oranges, watermelon, or grapes.

Water, sports drinks, unsweetened fruit juices, vegetable juice, fruit such as apples, oranges, watermelon, or grapes, bagel, whole-wheat bread with jam, muffin.

Water, sports drinks, unsweetened fruit juices, vegetable juice, fruit such as apples, oranges, watermelon, or grapes, bagel, whole-wheat bread with jam, muffin, bread with peanut butter or cheese, bowl of cereal with skim milk, low fat yogurt.

Any of the above, or lean meat sandwich, or pre-competition meal.

ALL-DAY TOURNAMENT FOODS SHOULD BE HIGH IN CARBOHYDRATES AND LOW IN FAT AND PROTEIN.

Examples of foods to eat at a tournament include:

Animal crackers
Bagels with jam
Bagels
Breads
Fresh fruit
Fruit bread
Fruit bars (ie. Fig Newtons)
Graham crackers
Juices
Low-fat fruit bars
Low-fat yogurt.
Low-fat pudding cups
Muffins
Oatmeal cookies
Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches
Pretzels
Popcorn, air-popped
Sports drinks
String cheese
Turkey sandwiches with low-fat mayonnaise

Berning, Jackie & Coleman, Ellen, Professional Presentations, various dates; Nutrition Education Instructional Materials, Michigan Weight Monitoring Program, 1996.

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NUTRITION IDEAS FOR WRESTLERS

FAST FOODS

Eating a healthy, balanced meal at a fast food restaurant can be a challenge for anyone. Wrestlers may think it is impossible for them to eat fast food without gaining weight. In reality, **there are choices at fast food restaurants that can fit into a wrestler's diet plan**. While fast food should not be the mainstay of anyone's diet, by following the ideas given below it is possible for wrestlers to occasionally eat fast food.

Here are a few ideas to help ensure a lower fat content in fast foods.

Avoid mayonnaise and special sauces on sandwiches.

Avoid fried items such as fish, chicken, chicken nuggets, French toast sticks, and french fries.

Choose Swiss cheese as it is lower in fat than American.

Don't add gravies to foods.

Don't order foods with extra cheese or bacon added.

Drink low-fat milk.

If you have no choice but to order fried foods, remove the skin as it contains large amounts of fat.

Order salads with low-fat dressing.

Some food preparation methods can also help keep the calorie content from getting too high. Low fat cooking methods include steaming, roasting, poaching, broiling, baking, and cooked in its own juice.

The following is a comparison of high fat and low fat meal choices.

BREAKFAST

Low fat choices

Bagels
English muffin with jam or honey
Hot or cold cereal
Muffins
Orange juice
Pancakes with syrup, but little butter
Low-fat milk
Toast with jam

High fat choices

Bacon
Hash rounds
Sausage & egg sandwiches

LUNCH & DINNER

Low fat choices

Baked entrees
Broiled meat
Low-fat bean burrito
Chef or side salads with low fat dressing
Grilled lean hamburgers w/o special sauce
Grilled chicken w/o mayonnaise
Lean meat sandwiches
Low-fat milk
Low-fat yogurt cones
Pizza with thin or hand tossed crust
(Avoid pepperoni, sausage, extra cheese)

High fat choices

Any deluxe sandwiches
Chicken nuggets
Crispy shell Mexican dishes
French fries
Fried chicken
Hot dogs with cheese/chili
Nachos Supreme
Sandwiches with cheese
Whole milk

In summary, while everyone should be careful when eating at fast food restaurants to avoid foods high in fat content, wrestlers must be very careful. There are healthy choices to be made at fast food restaurants and being prepared ahead of time will help in making good choices.

Sources: Eating on the Run, 2nd edition, Tribolo, E., 1992; Eating on the Road, U.S. Olympic Committee Sports Medicine Division and the International Center for Sports Medicine, 1993; Fast Foods, U.S. Olympic Committee Sports Medicine Division and the International Center for Sports Medicine, 1993; Nutrition Education Instructional Materials, Michigan Weight Monitoring Program, 1996; "Wise Food Choices for Athletes on the Road," Gatorade Sports Science Exchange #1, Berning, Jackie, 1988.

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NUTRITION IDEAS FOR WRESTLERS

A LITTLE SODIUM GOES A LONG WAY!

Sodium is a mineral essential for good health and athletic performance. For optimum muscle functioning during exercise, one's body must have the proper balance of sodium and water. **However, too much sodium can lead to fluid retention because extra sodium requires additional water for dilution. Fluid retention results in weight gain and impaired athletic performance.**

Excessive amounts of sodium in the body can be caused by consuming too much sodium in one's diet or through fluid loss, especially by sweating. If this lost fluid is not replaced, it increases the sodium concentration in one's body. This triggers the thirst response which is why one usually drinks more water during exercise. If the body is deprived of water it becomes dehydrated. **In a dehydrated state the muscles cannot contract properly and are fatigued more easily.**

According to the National Research Council, 1100 to 3300 milligrams of sodium per day is adequate. Most Americans consume 2-6 times that amount! Sodium is most commonly found in table salt. A teaspoon of salt contains approximately 2300 milligrams of sodium.

Follow these hints to reduce sodium in your diet:

1. **Avoid the salt shaker!** Salty food is an acquired taste. After 2-3 months without the salt shaker, it won't be missed.
2. **Eat foods whose label's state "unsalted," "no salt added," "without added salt," or "low sodium" often.** Be careful of foods stating they have "reduced sodium" because they may have started with extremely high amounts of sodium.
3. **Eat pickles, ketchup, mustard, and special sauces sparingly** as they often contain high amounts of sodium.
4. **Eat processed foods like ham, bacon, and sausage sparingly.**
5. **Eat sparingly of foods listing salt or sodium as one of the first items on the label.**

Here is a list of the sodium content in ten common foods:

Food	Milligrams of sodium
Dill pickle, whole	928 mg
Tomato juice, 6 ounces	658 mg
Low fat cottage cheese, ½ cup	459 mg
Italian dressing, 2 Tbsp.	300 mg
Corn Flakes, 1 cup	281 mg
Potato chips, 1 ounce	216 mg
Instant pudding, ½ cup	161 mg
White bread, 1 slice	129 mg
Skim milk, 8 ounces	126 mg
Cocktail peanuts, 1 ounce	118 mg

Sources: Boise State University Wellness Web Site, <www.boisestate.edu/wellness/bsu_wellness_info/sodium.htm>; Johns Hopkins University Nutrition Web Site, <www.med.jhu.edu/nutrition/sodium.htm>

NUTRITION IDEAS FOR WRESTLERS

ENERGY FOR IMPROVED WRESTLING PERFORMANCE

There is nothing a wrestler can eat between the time of weigh-in and his first match to compensate for a poor diet and drastic weight loss during the days before a match. The handout titled, “***Nutrition Ideas for Wrestlers: Eating Healthy Every Day,***” contains ideas about what wrestlers should be eating on a daily basis to keep their energy levels high. **The key to having adequate energy to wrestle effectively is to eat a healthy, balanced diet every day.**

Between the time of weigh-in and competition it is extremely important for wrestlers to drink water, a sports drink, fruit juice, or vegetable juice. Recent research has shown drinking fluids as little as 30-60 minutes before exercise will improve performance.

Here are some ideas of what wrestlers could eat and drink between the time of weigh-in and competition. Those wrestlers who will wrestle within 60 minutes after weighing in should limit their intake to fluids, probably sports drinks and water.

apple
apple juice
banana
grapes
orange
orange juice

peaches
pears
sports drink
vegetable juice
water
yogurt, sweetened

It is also important for wrestlers to eat high carbohydrate foods which will quickly replace the energy used during practice or competition. Within 15 - 30 minutes after practice, or a match, wrestlers need to eat to replenish their fuel supply.

Examples of foods to eat immediately after exercise are:

angel food cake
bagels
bananas
carrots
Cheerios*, with low-fat milk
corn bread or muffins
Corn Flakes*, with low-fat milk
graham crackers
Grape Nut Flakes*, with low-fat milk
grapes
low-fat, fruit yogurt

pretzels, especially low sodium
raisins
rice cakes
Rice Krispies*, with low-fat milk
Shredded Wheat*, with low-fat milk
sports drinks, especially high carbohydrate
(These may cause stomach upset if one is not used to drinking them.)
watermelon
wheat cracker
white rice

orange juice
pineapple or pineapple juice
potatoes; baked, instant, or mashed

white or wheat bread with honey

* = brand name product

By eating these same foods between matches during a tournament, wrestlers can keep their energy levels high throughout the day.

Especially after practice or competition, avoid foods high in fat and salt. Both of these will cause weight gain over the next few days due to water retention.

It is also very important for wrestlers to drink plenty of water during and after workouts, and during tournaments. **Lack of water reduces physical and mental performance much more quickly than lack of food.** Drinking during the day at school, before workouts, during and after workouts, and during tournaments will help prevent wrestlers from becoming dehydrated.

Sources: "Taking It To the Mat: The Wrestler's Guide to Optimal Performance," The Center for Nutrition in Sport and Human Performance, University of Massachusetts, 1999; Training and Conditioning, "A New Facet in Performance Nutrition," Morgan, Tracy, CSCS; Gatorade Sports Science Exchange, "Glycemic Index and Exercise Metabolism," Volume 10, 1997.