



PREFERRED FUEL SOURCES FOR YOUTH ATHLETES



Micro and macronutrient composition of meals is essential to performance and recovery. If you are concerned about what to feed your young athletes this list will help!

I have compiled this guide of nutrient dense fruits, vegetables, proteins, carbohydrates and fats so you can build meals and snacks with the highest quality foods, and to help you incorporate new foods to better fuel you and your athletes.

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Best Fruits & Vegetables for Youth Athletes

Fruits and vegetables contain micronutrients like vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients and antioxidants. These compounds are essential for health, reduced inflammation and recovery. They also contain soluble and insoluble fiber which are both important for digestive health!

Aim to get something from every color every day!!

GREEN

Mixed greens: spinach, arugula, kale, romaine lettuce, Broccoli, brussels sprouts and bok choy, asparagus, celery, cucumbers, Kiwi, green grapes and zucchini.

WHITE/ YELLOW

Cauliflower, napa cabbage, parsnips, corn, yuca, red skinned potatoes, banana, plantains, Sun kiwis (they are delicious), starfruit, spaghetti squash, pineapple and yellow squash.

RED

Tomatoes, red apples (my favorite is sweet tango apples), cherries, raspberries, strawberries, radish, red bell peppers, goji berries and pomegranate seeds.

ORANGE

Carrots, sweet potatoes, oranges, mandarins, orange bell peppers, acorn squash, butternut squash, pumpkin, and cantaloupe.

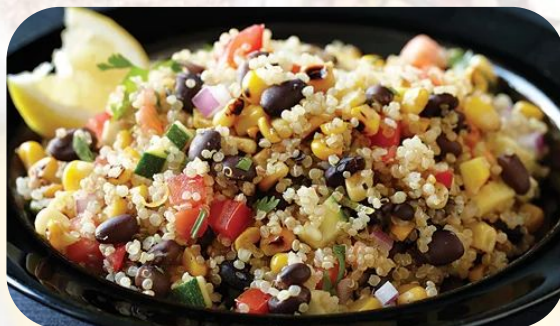
BLUE/ PURPLE

Blueberries, blackberries, purple sweet potato, grapes, purple cauliflower, plums/ prunes, raisins, red grapes, eggplant, purple carrots, purple cabbage and beets.

Best Carbohydrates Sources for Youth Athletes

Carbohydrates are essential sources of energy for both your brain and body and will help fuel your practice and performance. Make sure to get carbohydrates in through different sources throughout the day and use lower fiber carbohydrate sources for energizing snacks prior games.

- **Whole Grains:** faro, quinoa, brown rice and whole wheat pasta or orzo, rolled oats or Irish/ steel cut oatmeal. Whole grain or multigrain bread.
 - If white bread is preferred look for a high quality sourdough bread
 - Whole wheat english muffins and bagels are also wonderful
- **All varieties of lentils and beans:** chickpeas, red beans, black beans, etc.
- **Whole grain waffles or whole grain pancakes**
 - *I like Kodiak Cakes, Kashi & Birch Benders brands*
- **Crackers - look for whole grains, real ingredients, and as much fiber as possible**
- **Granola and high fiber cereal - look for varieties with <8g of sugar per serving and no food colorings**



Best Protein Sources for Youth Athletes

Protein is absolutely essential for young athletes and supports everything from muscle growth, development and repair to immune system function and proper enzyme and hormone production. We should aim to include a high quality source of protein at every meal along with another serving of protein, 30-90 minutes following practice and meets/ games to ensure proper recovery from exercise.

- **Game meats** (*grass-fed/ organic is preferred*) like Elk, Bison, Venison, Wild boar & Yak
 - **Pork** is also a great source of protein. Pork tenderloin is very lean and easy to meal prep. You can use pork chops too.
- **Fish & seafood** (*wild caught or organically & sustainable farmed is preferred*): salmon, rainbow trout, arctic char, seabass, cod, halibut, tuna (if canned look for sustainable sourced/ mercury tested), shrimp, mussels, and crab
- **Poultry**: chicken breast, chicken thigh, ground turkey, turkey breast or turkey burgers.
 - A medium to large chicken egg
- **Lean Beef** (*grass-fed/ organic is preferred*) like lean cuts include filet, flank steak, skirt steak & 93/7% ground or better
- **Dairy** including cottage cheese or plain Greek yogurt or Icelandic yogurt, organic is preferred
 - Do not purchase flavored yogurts. Purchase plain, and add your own fruit, all natural jam, vanilla extract or cinnamon to keep the added sugars minimized
- **High-quality whey protein powder**: 1 serving per day and best when used as a pre- or post-practice snack
 - Preferred Brand: Thorne Labs whey protein or Optimum nutrition Gold Standard whey protein
 - Unflavored protein powder: NAKED Whey Protein
- **Vegetarian Protein Sources**: Tofu/ Edamame/ Tempeh
 - Vegan Protein Powder: Thorne Labs Whey Protein or 1st Phorm Phormula 1 Vegan protein
 - You can create a complete vegetarian protein by combining whole grains & beans or lentils for another vegetarian option

Best Fat Sources for Youth Athletes

Including healthy fats at meals not only helps you stay full and energized throughout the day but they also help reduce inflammation which speeds recovery from exercise and training. Healthy fats are also critical for keeping your heart and brain functioning properly which can impact the health of your youth athletes for years to come.

- **Mixed nuts:** almonds, cashews, pecans, walnuts, macadamia nuts, pistachios or peanuts
- **Nut or Seed butter:** peanut butter, almond butter or sun butter (sunflower seed butter)
- **Seeds:** pumpkin seeds, chia seeds, sunflower seeds, or hemp seeds
- **Avocado**
- **Oils:** olive oil (*best for low heat cooking & salad dressings*), avocado oil (*best for medium-high heat cooking*), or coconut oil (*best for high heat cooking & baking*)
- **Butter, ghee, or tallow**
- **Cheese:** goat, feta, mozzarella (*these three are lower in saturated fat*) or cheddar, Swiss, provolone, and Munster
 - *Organic cheese is preferred*

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