



- *Proper nutrition supports training and can improve performance*
 - You feel better.
 - You exercise better.
 - You'll *always* win with good nutrition!

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As you begin your training at the Bushido School of *Karate* you make sure you have everything you need, like your uniform. Of course you would never consider coming to practice without your gear – would you? You would also want to be sure that you are prepared mentally and physically as well. But how do you prepare physically? – Eating healthy can prepare you from the inside out. In fact, what you eat has a powerful effect on your ability to perform at your best

Everyone needs to eat a variety of healthy foods, and athletes are no different. Young athletes who eat healthy, well-balanced meals and snacks will get all the nutrients needed to perform. The [MyPlate food guide](#) can provide guidance on what kinds of foods and drinks to include in your meals and snacks. Of course, young athletes will have higher energy and fluid requirements and need to eat the right amount and mix of foods to support that higher level of activity, but that mix might not be too different from a normal healthy diet. Eating for sports should be an extension of healthy eating for life.

Eating a variety of foods from the five food groups helps you get the nutrients you need to grow, play hard and be healthy. In addition to getting the right amount of calories, it takes a variety of nutrients to keep you performing at your best: These nutrients include carbohydrates, protein, water and fats, as well as vitamins, mineral.

Carbohydrates: Carbs give you energy to run jump and even blink your eyes. They're an important source of fuel for young athletes, without carbs in your diet you will be running on empty. The best sources of carbs are whole-grain foods like whole-wheat pasta, brown rice, whole-grain bread and cereal, and plenty of fruits and vegetables.

Protein: Protein is used by the body to build and repair muscles, skin, bone and more. You do need adequate protein on a daily basis and most young people get plenty of protein through a balanced diet, but muscular development depends more on regular training and exercise than upon eating excessive protein. Protein can also provide energy – (but why would you want to use protein when carbs provide a much more efficient way to fuel you body), but be careful, too much protein can lead to dehydration and calcium loss. You can find lots of protein in fish, lean meat and poultry, dairy products, beans, nuts, and soy products.

Fats help your body absorb, or take in certain vitamins and have healthy skin. The body can also use fats for energy. Heart-healthy oils are found in avocados, olives nuts, seeds and some fish.

Vitamins and minerals Young people need a variety of vitamins and minerals. Calcium and iron are two important nutrients – especially for young athletes.

- Calcium builds strong bones, which are less likely to break under the stress and strain of heavy activity. Dairy products, like milk, yogurt, and cheese are excellent sources of calcium. You can also find calcium in dark, green leafy vegetables and calcium-fortified products, like orange juice.
- Iron helps carry oxygen to all the different parts of the body. Iron-rich foods include lean meat, chicken, tuna, salmon, eggs, dried fruits, leafy green vegetables, and fortified whole grains. It's important to include iron-rich foods in your diet, without enough; you might get tired more easily.

Water helps the body move nutrients to all parts of the body. Water is in most foods especially fruits and vegetables.

It's important for young athletes to drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Even mild dehydration can affect performance. Dehydration can zap strength, energy, and coordination and lead to heat-related illness. If you get dehydrated you won't feel well or perform well. Serious dehydration can make you sick enough that you'd need to go to the emergency department for treatment

Experts agree drinking before, during, and after exercising (or an event) is the best way to stay hydrated. Because thirst is not a reliable indicator of hydration status, never wait until you're thirsty. For young athletes, water is the best choice; fruit juice mixed with water is another option

The average young athlete can and should get all the necessary nutrients and hydration by eating healthy foods and drinking plenty of water before, during, and after exercise. The amount of water needed can vary depending on age, weight, intensity of the activity, and weather conditions.

Drinking water instead of a sweet beverage, like soda is a healthy way to cool off and satisfy your thirst; you should always avoid sugary drinks and carbonated beverages, especially caffeinated ones - they can upset your stomach.

A Cautionary Word about Sports and Energy Drinks

Don't be so quick to believe the hype when it comes to sports and energy drinks, and while they do have their benefits. The best way to improve your training is through hard work and practice — values that will serve you well with anything that you do.

Sports Drinks are designed to provide energy and replace electrolytes — such as sodium and potassium. Many of these drinks also contain additional ingredients whose safety or effectiveness has never been tested in young people — including herbal supplements, guarana (a source of caffeine), and taurine (an amino acid thought to enhance performance and caffeine's effects). Large amounts of caffeine can have even more serious side effects (including fast or irregular heartbeats, high blood pressure, hallucinations, and seizures), especially for young people with certain medical conditions or who take medications or supplements.

Meal and Snack Suggestions

It's important that you eat healthy meals and snacks consistently, even when you are not training. This will provide a solid foundation during times of training and competition.

Nothing beats a well-balanced and healthy diet.

Breakfast and lunch are the best energy boosters. Eating appropriately at these meals, prevents the need for quick energy, especially since your body will be well fueled, and not likely to run on fumes. Skipping breakfast or skimping on lunch, you'll tend to crave sweets (a sign that your body is too hungry) and seek out some candy or other source of quick energy.

For a good breakfast try low-fat yogurt with some granola and a banana, or whole-grain cereal and low-fat milk with sliced strawberries. For lunch a bean burritos with low-fat cheese, lettuce, and tomatoes or a turkey sandwich on whole-wheat bread with a piece of fruit provides loads of healthy nutrients. Grilled chicken breasts with steamed rice and vegetables, or pasta with red sauce and lean ground beef, along with a salad makes an excellent dinner. Half a sandwich, fresh or dried fruit, a small handful of nuts or raisins, crackers, string cheese and pretzels are all good snacks.

This information provides general guidelines to help optimize dietary intake for young athletes. Dietary intake requirements can vary depending upon an individual's energy expenditure, metabolism, state of health and sport. . For addition information including age specific needs consult a registered dietitian nutritionist or consult the web-sites below.

Right Weigh Nutrition Consulting
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917-992-9519

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/kids/downloads/ServingUpMyPlate-level3-TeachersGuide.pdf>

http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/food/sports.html

<http://www.usada.org/resources/nutrition/?gclid=CP7MjLzbnkMECFRIS7AodBgoA1g>

http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_center/dietary_needs/feed_child_athlete.html#