

8 Ways to Eat Right

1. **EAT CARBS** Carbohydrates are the best fuel for hard-working swimmers, but be sure to choose those with the most nutrients. Getting your carbs from whole grain bread, cereals, vegetables, fruits, pasta, and beans is best. In addition to the carbs, these foods will give you fiber, vitamins and minerals.
2. **PICK A FRUIT** You may shun fruits and vegetables, but that's where the vitamins are. Juice can make up for a vitamin C shortfall, but for the necessary vitamins and fiber, there's no substitute for food. Apples, oranges, and bananas are quick-to-consume energy sources for before and after your workout. Or snack on carrots and celery sticks with low-fat cream cheese, or add cucumbers and tomatoes to your sandwich.
3. **SNACK SMART** Rice cakes, bagels, pretzels--great snacks, right? These foods are great resources to carbohydrates, but since they have no fat, you get hungry quickly again. You have to have some fat to keep you satisfied for a while, so you may want to add some cheese or peanut butter, yogurt, or low-fat milk. If you're snacking, you're on the right track. Eating several small meals throughout the day may be a good idea. Eat trail mix with nuts, raisins, and pretzels instead of plain pretzels, or drink low-fat milk with your rice cakes. If you're not allowed to eat outside of the cafeteria, ask permission from your teacher or the principal for some quick food breaks during the day. Avoid high-fat foods before swimming because they take longer to digest and may make you feel sluggish during your workout and give you an upset stomach.
4. **BOTTLE IT** Bring a water bottle/sports drink to practice everyday. Plan drink breaks throughout your workout. Drink as much as possible throughout work out. Sport drinks help your performance by keeping your body refueled with carbs and electrolytes. You can practice harder and longer without the feeling of being tired. In addition to drinking during practice, follow every workout with at least 24 ounces of fluid and a snack as well. Drinking doesn't begin and end with workout either. Drink often throughout the school day as well.
5. **PUMP IRON** If you're dragging in the pool, it could be more than your baggy suit. Do you not get enough sleep--and enough iron? Low iron

- prevents your blood from carrying the maximum amount of oxygen to your cells, so you poop out in the pool and elsewhere. Simple solution: eat more lean meat, beef, fish, chicken and turkey. Make sure they are lean, since you don't want extra cholesterol. Fat in the pool can slow you down. If your not a meat eater you can get iron from peas, tomato juice, nuts, dried fruits, squash, potato skins, and enriched grains, (cereals, bread, and fortified pastas).
6. **PROTEIN** Carbohydrates are fantastic fuel to load up on, but don't forget about protein. Protein is important for building muscle and fighting infection. Example foods to eat include: lean meat, beans, whole grains, eggs, nuts, and low-fat dairy foods. It is important to get protein from foods and not supplements. Be wary of protein pills and powders because they could contain substances banned by the NCAA or the International Olympic Committee.
 7. **DRINK MILK** Chocolate milk is a great for recovery. Your bones keep growing and getting thicker even after you've stopped growing taller, so you need an ample intake of calcium throughout your life as insurance for when you start losing bone density. Boost your bone density by drinking milk. Don't worry, it's not fattening. Skim milk has only 85 calories and no fat in an 8-oz. glass. You also need calcium from other dairy foods, and also from vegetables such as broccoli and mustard greens. Or you can drink calcium-fortified orange juice or soy milk.
 8. **THINK DIFFERENTLY** Not only should you eat enough (2,200-2,800 calories a day) to swim fast, you should also eat a variety of foods. A balanced diet gives you the sustained energy you need both in the pool and out, as well as the nutrients that keep you in top form. Today, with the amount of food available, there's no excuse not to eat a more varied diet. Think of the humble sandwich: You're no longer stuck with boring bologna an cheese or predictable peanut butter and jelly.