Q: I don’t think I get enough vitamins and minerals in my diet. Should I take a supplement?

A: Supplements cannot make up for poor food choices. While they may supply some vitamins and minerals, supplements do not contain all the nutrients found in food. Besides, foods taste better, and it is easier to remember to eat than to pop a pill. To get the 40+ nutrients your body needs each day, eat different foods from each of the Five Food Groups.

PEAK POINT
Avoid getting too hungry – sometimes if we wait too long to eat, we may end up eating more than we really need.

Q: What is the best performance diet?

A: The best performance diet is one that includes all Five Food Groups. Some athletes emphasize one food group in the name of performance. However, if you overeat one food group, then you fall short on the other food groups, and you will not get all the vital nutrients your body needs. While carbohydrates are the preferred fuel for exercising muscles and the brain, all of the food groups are important because each provides different macronutrients, vitamins and minerals needed for optimal health and performance. Choose a variety of nutrient-rich foods from all Five Food Groups (dairy, fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins) for peak performance.

Q: Why is caffeine added to some sports bars, gels and beverages, and how does it affect my performance?

A: Studies show that caffeine may enhance performance by improving alertness. However, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends against the use of caffeine containing products for children and adolescents because in excess amounts, caffeine has been associated with harmful cardiovascular and neurological effects. Instead, it’s important to choose nutrient-rich foods and beverages and build balanced meals – let these serve as your fuel for athletic success.

Q: Why is milk good after a workout?

A: Milk – both white and chocolate – provides key nutrients athletes need after exercise.

Milk’s Winning Team:
- Milk is 90% water and a great tasting choice after practices and games. Milk’s fluids and electrolytes, including calcium, potassium and magnesium, rehydrate the body and replenish what’s lost in sweat.
- Carbohydrates refuel muscles after exercise.
- High quality protein helps with muscle recovery.
- Calcium, vitamin D, and phosphorus build and maintain strong bones.
- Milk’s potassium helps ward off muscle cramping.
- B vitamins help convert food to energy.

Emerging research in adult athletes indicates that one serving of milk post-exercise may help reduce muscle damage and improve muscle recovery – which in turn, may help the body perform better during its next workout. Improve your post-exercise regimen by refueling with milk within 30-60 minutes after exercise.
Q: **Sports drinks and energy drinks, tell me more.**

A: The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) acknowledges that sports drinks can be beneficial for some young athletes (during prolonged activities or day-long events). In most instances however, the Academy encourages water to rehydrate and low-fat or fat-free milk to help meet nutrient needs.

The terms ‘sports drink’ and ‘energy drink’ are often used interchangeably, however, they are very different in composition. Sports drinks are typically a combination of water and carbohydrates, with a small amount of sodium and potassium. Energy drinks, on the other hand, in addition to carbohydrates, protein, vitamins and minerals, typically contain stimulants, such as caffeine and guarana (a substance with a similar effect to caffeine). Energy drinks do not provide long-term energy – instead they result in an energy high before “the crash.” According to the AAP, stimulant-containing energy drinks have no place in the diets of children and adolescents.

Q: **My coach is always on me about eating breakfast. What’s the big deal? It’s only breakfast.**

A: True, it’s just one meal, but breakfast is an important meal. Just as your car won’t run without fuel in its tank, your body doesn’t work to its potential when you don’t adequately fuel it in the morning. Not only can eating breakfast help with weight management, it can also improve nutrient intake, enhance your sports performance, and improve your grades. If you don’t have time for breakfast at home, or don’t feel like eating first thing in the morning, plan to have breakfast a little later. Bring fruit and yogurt from home to eat before school, or eat breakfast at school.

### Yogurt Parfait

- 8 oz. low-fat vanilla yogurt
- ½ cup fresh fruit (try sliced strawberries, sliced banana, blueberries or raspberries)
- ½ cup granola

Layer yogurt, fruit and granola in a glass. Serve immediately.

### Anytime Burrito

Too late for breakfast? Too early for lunch?

Scramble up an egg. While it’s cooking, add some cheese, diced green pepper, and onion. Wrap in a tortilla and enjoy with salsa.

For more recipes, visit NationalDairyCouncil.org.