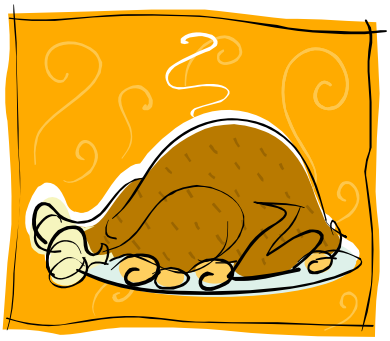
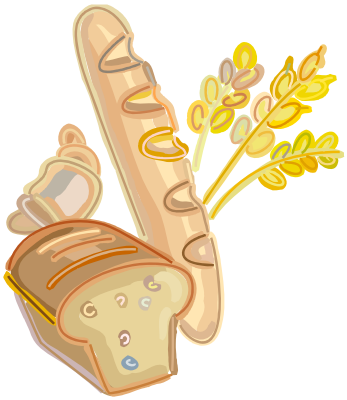
How to Help the Athlete Eat Right

The Pre-Game Meal	**Nutritional Concerns After the Event**
The pre-competition meal should: 1. Be high in carbohydrate and low in fat. 2. Be eaten about 3 to 5 hours before competition. 3. Provide liberal fluid intake for adequate prehydration.	The two most important nutritional post-event concerns are: 1. Adequate rehydration to achieve Pre-event weight. Drink plenty of water. 2. Adequate carbohydrate intake to restore glycogen stores.

School Food Service

The meal eaten at school is often the pre-event meal. Studies have also shown that the meal eaten at school is often the most substantial meal of the day for many students. One of the most important ways that school foodservice personnel can help the athlete be better nourished is to provide low-fat alternates on days when high-fat products are on the menu. The following are a few suggestions:

1. **Fruit as a choice** when high-fat desserts are offered.
2. **Low-fat meats** such as turkey (not turkey bologna or turkey wieners) when high-fat choices such as bologna, wieners or nuggets are served.
3. **A choice** of skim and 2% milk.

The school lunchroom provides an excellent location to teach about good nutrition through the use of posters, nutritional information displays regarding the food being served, table tents, question/answer stations, etc.

Parents

1. **Be a good role model.** "Do as I do, not just as I say." Studies have shown that the most powerful influence on a child's food choices is the parent's food choices and eating habits.

2. **Buy nutritious foods that the athlete likes.** If the athlete in your house is interested in eating more nutritiously in order to perform better, this may be your chance to improve the health of the entire family.

3. **Make nutritious foods easily accessible.** Have foods pre-made and waiting in the refrigerator is helpful.

Coaches

1. **Be a good role model.**

2. **Provide accurate information.** This can be done by planning guest speakers on sports nutrition to speak to the athletes.

3. **Be the "sports nutrition advocate"** in the school who encourages parent education regarding sports nutrition, emphasizes the contribution that the school foodservice personnel can make, and works with administration in setting policies that influence the nutritional intake of the athlete.

Administration

1. **Encouraging participation in school lunch** by discouraging sale of nonnutritious (and competitive) foods during the noon hours.

2. **Offering support to** coaches in their attempts to plan trips and events with good nutrition in mind.

3. **Offering support to school foodservice** personnel in their attempts to provide low-fat alternatives.

4. **Seeking out funding** for nutrition education in the school through Nutrition Education and Training program grants or other possible grant sources.

What can your school foodservice staff do to help the athlete eat right?

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Adapted from: Sports Nutrition Fact Sheets and Classroom Activities. North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, Bismarck, ND.