

# Wee Learn

Wee Mentors  
(6+ Years):  
6 Nutrition Tips for  
Young Athletes



Just like the pros, your little athlete at home needs the right fuel to keep performing at their best. Get in the game with these six essential nutrition tips to keep pint-sized players pumped for games and practices and fortified with what they need to grow.

## What Young Athletes should Eat

Young athletes should build balanced plates when they eat meals, says Katie Jeffrey, MS, RD, CSSD, a registered dietitian. About 50 to 60 percent of their meal should be composed of carbohydrates such as rice and pasta, 25-30 percent of their meal should be composed of vegetables, and the last 15-20 percent should be composed of lean protein such as chicken, eggs, etc.

## Staying Hydrated

Children who are active and are athletes are more likely to suffer from heat-related illness, therefore; fluids are essential through out their activities or games. Hydrating foods such as oranges and watermelons are also great foods to keep the children quenched. Always have a water bottles on hand, it's the best source of hydration on the court, field, or ice.

## Important Meals

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day especially for active children. Starting a child off with a good breakfast will help fuel their energy when they are practicing or playing a game. Children should not miss meals and should eat three to four hours before their games or practice so that it gives the body enough time to digest and store nutrients.

## Tournaments and All-Day Games

When children are in sports such as basketball or soccer, they may have tournaments or will play consecutive games through out the day. For these occasions, it is important to pack light, healthy snacks that will boost their energy level in between games (i.e. Greek yogurt, pretzels).

## Recommended Energy Requirements, kcal/day

Age, years	Male	Female
4-6	1800	1800
7-10	2000	2000



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## Reaching the finish line

A well-balanced diet is essential for growing athletes to maintain proper growth and optimize performance in athletic endeavours. Recovery foods that include carbohydrates and protein (i.e. Cottage cheese, fruit and cheese, graham crackers with peanut butter or no-nut butter) should be consumed within 30 min of exercise and again within 1 h to 2 h of activity to allow muscles to rebuild and ensure proper recovery.

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