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### Practical Concerns with Athletes' Diets

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#### ABSTRACT

Many athletes do not follow a sound nutritional plan to improve their athletic performance. Poor nutrition knowledge, dietary extremism, inadequate practical cooking or meal preparation skills, and limited availability of food because of a hectic schedule and frequent travel are a few of the contributing factors. In order to attain the aims of sound nutrition, nutrition education for athletes needs to be practical and cover eating techniques as well as an important food and fluid choices. Since athletes sometimes find it challenging to integrate many issues, strategies that can accomplish multiple dietary goals at once are most beneficial. A sports nutrition specialist should be consulted for an individual evaluation and counseling by athletes with excessive nutrient needs or nutritional issues

**Keywords:** Athletes, Dietary Strategies, Practical nutrition, Sports

#### INTRODUCTION

Many athletes do not follow a sound nutritional plan to improve their athletic performance. Poor nutrition knowledge, dietary extremism, inadequate practical cooking or meal preparation skills, and limited availability to food because of a hectic schedule and frequent travel are a few of the contributing factors. In order to attain the aims of sound nutrition, nutrition education for athletes needs to be practical and cover eating techniques as well as important food and fluid choices. Since athletes sometimes find it challenging to integrate many issues, strategies that can accomplish multiple dietary goals at once are most beneficial. A sports nutrition specialist should be consulted for an individual evaluation and counselling by athletes with excessive nutrient needs or nutritional issues. The variety of competitions and training methods seen in track and field sports, as well as the variations in dietary needs brought on by sex and age variances; make it challenging to develop a single set of nutrition recommendations for athletes. However, for coaches, athletes, and sports nutritionists, educational resources that address critical aspects of nutrition for athletes are a valuable resource. The most effective educational tactics are those that concentrate on real-world aspects of food preparation and choice, and on policies that can concurrently address several important nutrition-related issues. When nutritional goals can be met by making small adjustments to the average eating habits of the population, it may be enough to give athletes a set of behavioural tactics to help them make the necessary adjustments. An athlete's ability to follow basic nutritional guidelines is hampered by a number of reasons.

1. A lack of knowledge of the fundamentals of sports nutrition; dependence on myths and misconceptions.
2. A failure to take into account their unique dietary needs (arising from the specific features of their event and their training and from personal characteristics such as age, sex and physique).
3. A possible nutritional goal conflict (e.g. achieving increased requirements for nutrients such as carbohydrate and iron while limiting energy intake to achieve loss of body fat).
4. A lack of relevant nutrition expertise and information (e.g. knowledge of food composition, domestic skills such as food purchasing, preparation and cooking).
5. An overly busy lifestyle; insufficient opportunity or time to buy or consume nutritious foods because of a demanding sport or job schedule.

***A variety of foods***

A proper calorie intake and a diversity of foods are two important components in meeting nutrient requirements. The official dietary recommendations of many nations make it a priority to enjoy variety within and among food groups. Food variety throughout a meal may encourage positive nutrient interactions, such as ascorbic acid's improvement of non-hem iron absorption or the complementing of the amino acid makeup of proteins. Some athletes restrict their nutritional potential by eating only a certain type of food. Nutritional misunderstandings, dietary fats, and extreme dietary regimens like poorly chosen vegetarian and weight-loss diets may be directly responsible for this.

***Increasing the need for carbohydrates (and energy)***

For Western populations, an aim of healthy eating is to generally increase carbohydrate intake to at least 50% of total calorie intake. Some athletes may need to consume even more carbohydrates to maintain normal body glycogen levels between workouts and to meet their fuel needs. Goals for carbohydrate intake should be set if you have a hectic schedule that include lengthy, intense training or competition sessions. The daily calorie and carbohydrate needs to support intense training programmes are frequently higher than those for competition. Distance runners are one example of an athlete who may need to pay extra attention to their carbohydrate intake in the days before competition, at the pre-event meal, and even during the competition to perform at their best. Intake of carbohydrates may also be a component of athletes' post-competition recovery plans, particularly when they compete on many days (for example, in an event's heats and finals, in a multi-discipline event, or in a competition series).

***Reducing energy consumption and body fat while doing so securely***

A low body mass and/or low body fat percentage may give a physical, mechanical, or cosmetic advantage to sports performance in particular disciplines. This is especially true in sports where competitors must move their own body mass against gravity, such as long-distance running, running, and jumping. To develop and keep up a body physique better suited to the requirements of their sport, certain athletes may need to adjust their training regimen or nutritional intake. There is evidence that athletes hold a number of false beliefs about the ideal body mass and composition, as well as regarding effective, long-term ways to reduce body fat.