



NEGATIVES OF FOOD ELIMINATION IN SPORTS NUTRITION

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Athletes are at higher risk of developing eating disturbances and disorders than the general population. Preventing eating disorders is essential for athletes to avoid negative consequences to health and sport performance¹. Although eating disorders might sound like a harsh term to use when talking about eliminating certain foods, the reason for the action is the same. You want to alter your diet to achieve a specific outcome, positive or negative. Why should you avoid eliminating foods from your diet, specifically when you are an athlete? Unfortunately preoccupation with food always has a behavioural and emotional origin or result that needs to be addressed.

ELIMINATING FOODS VS. BEING HEALTH CONSCIOUS

Eliminating foods

Eliminating foods involves cutting out any one or more of the 5 food groups².

1. Dairy: milk, yoghurt, cheese and or milk alternatives
2. Fruit
3. Vegetables, beans and legumes
4. Protein: beef, fish, chicken, eggs, tofu
5. Grains: wholegrains, bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and cereals

If you refuse to include any of the above foods in your diet for any reason, you are eliminating a food from your diet. This prevents you from consuming a variety of foods and might alter your nutrient intake. Your body not only needs multiple micronutrients to function optimally, but bodily functions depend on different macronutrients contributing to your total energy intake in the right proportions. As an athlete you rely on your body to function effectively to enhance performance.

Being health conscious

Being health conscious involves including all of the above mentioned food groups in your diet, but you choose to eat only the healthy versions of each group. For example, you will consume grains, but only grains that are whole wheat, low GI and high in fibre. This means that you will limit your intake of refined grains, high fat meats and sweetened dairy products. Being health conscious supplies your body with a variety of foods including micro-and macronutrients in the right proportions to ensure optimal bodily functions.



HOW ELIMINATING FOODS CAN AFFECT YOUR PERFORMANCE

- Can lead to eating disorders that will affect your performance
- Increase risk of becoming obsessed with food
- Leads to restricting healthy balanced energy intake that will negatively affect performance
- If you do not have enough energy (from all the macronutrients) it will result in ineffective training sessions
- Every part in your body needs a different nutrient to function properly, performance is directly affected by how healthy your body is
- Eliminating certain food groups from your diet can affect your immune system negatively. If you are ill frequently it will decrease your overall training time and performance
- Vitamins and minerals are essential for a healthy body and the best way to get in all the vitamins and minerals that you need is to consume a variety of foods

HOW MUCH OF EACH MACRONUTRIENT

It is not only important to consume a variety of foods, but it is as important to rely on the right amount of energy that is supplied to your body from the different food groups.

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are found in grains, fruits, vegetables and dairy. Most of the calories in your diet should come from carbohydrates. The AMDR (Acceptable Macronutrient Distribution Ranges) for carbohydrates is 45 to 65 percent of your daily calorie intake. Carbohydrates provide 4 calories per 1g, so if you require 2,500 calories per day, your carbohydrate intake should range from 282g of carbohydrates to 406g of carbohydrates³.

Fat

Fat is found in meat, nuts and dairy. Fat intake should consist of 20 to 35 percent of your daily calories. Fat is the most energy-dense macronutrient, which means it contains the most calories in each gram. 1g of fat provides 9 calories. If you consume 2,500 calories per day, your fat intake should range from 56g to 97g³.

Protein

Protein is found in meats, legumes, beans, nuts and dairy. Protein should contribute 10 to 35 percent of your daily calories. Like carbohydrates, protein provides 4 calories per 1g. If you consume 2,500 calories, protein intake should fall between 63g and 219g. Because the AMDR for protein is such a wide range, you can also determine your protein needs by your body weight. You should consume 0.8g of protein for every 1kg of body weight. If you weigh 68kg, this translates to approximately 55g of protein per day³.



CONCLUSION

Being an athlete only means that you have to look after your body so much more, because you expect a lot from your body. You need to make sure you give every cell what it needs to perform and function effectively. By eliminating foods from your diet you are potentially depriving your muscles and brain of essential nutrients. Eating a variety of foods is an easy way to ensure that your body get what it needs to perform how you want it to.

WHERE DOES FUTURELIFE® FIT IN?

FUTURELIFE® has a range of balanced products available, that fit perfectly into an athlete's busy schedule and fulfil their demanding nutritional requirements. For example:

- FUTURELIFE® Smart food™ is ideal to be used as an on-the-go-meal or everyday breakfast and is ideal for pre-exercise fueling
- FUTURELIFE® HIGH PROTEIN Smart food™ can be used as a post-workout as part of a healthy diet.
- Enjoy FUTURELIFE® Smart Drink™ as an on-the-go snack or post-workout. It contains 10g of protein per serving and is low GI to keep you fuller for longer.
- FUTURELIFE® High Energy SmartBar is great to fuel your energy stores before or during training
- FUTURELIFE® CRUNCH Smart food™ can serve as a quick crunchy snack at work or on the go.

For more information on the range visit www.futurelife.co.za

REFERENCES

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3. PAULA, ELLE. Macronutrient Ratios in a Diet. *Livestrong*. [Online] October 3, 2017. [Cited: February 13, 2018.] <https://www.livestrong.com/article/388545-macronutrient-ratios-in-a-diet/>.