

Home / **Home**[BACK](#)

10 FOODS SWIMMERS SHOULD BE EATING

6/17/2014

Like Tweet 

BY JILL CASTLE, MS, RDN

The mystery behind what to eat is never-ending, partly because miracle foods are constantly surfacing while other foods fall from grace. When it comes to the growing swimmer, what to eat is important for growth and development, and also for athletic performance. Many children and teens in today's world are missing out on calcium, vitamin D, fiber and potassium. Teens and athletes in general may be at greater risk of nutrient deficiencies if they skip breakfast, snack on nutrient-poor foods and use diets to control their weight.

Given this, here are 10 foods that will keep your nutrient intake high and your risk for deficiency low:

Nuts: All nuts are chock-full of healthy fats, fiber, protein, magnesium and vitamin E. Use them to top yogurt or cereal, or just grab a handful on the way to practice.



Seeds: Similar to nuts, seeds are full of fiber, healthy fats, magnesium and vitamin E. Eat them like you would nuts.

Ready-to-eat cereals: Cereal is fortified with nutrients such as folic acid, iron and vitamins A and E, making them a good source for these micronutrients. Have it for breakfast, snack, or dinner in a pinch, but beware of choosing cereal with too much sugar. Cereals with less than 8 or 9 grams of sugar per serving are best.

100% orange juice: Increasingly, you can find calcium and vitamin D- fortified OJ. Orange juice is naturally a good source of folic acid and vitamin C. Don't guzzle it though! Orange juice can be a significant source of calories when more than a cup and a half is consumed daily.



Beans: Magical indeed! Full of fiber, protein, iron, zinc and magnesium—find ways to fit beans into your weekly (or daily) diet. Roast them for a crunchy snack, top a salad or burrito, or throw them in with diced tomatoes for a hearty pasta dish.

Low-fat cheese: An easy snack or serve it mixed into casseroles, pasta and in sandwiches. Low-fat cheese is full of calcium, potassium, and protein.

Low-fat yogurt: "Nutrient-rich" is an understatement! Yogurt is a good source of calcium, vitamin D, potassium and protein. Go for Greek varieties if you are looking for extra protein. It's great as part of a meal, as a snack, or dessert.



Low-fat milk or soymilk: Dairy milk is a natural source of calcium, potassium, protein and vitamin D. If soymilk is your go-to, make sure it is fortified with calcium and vitamin D. Many athletes use flavored milk (chocolate milk) for a post-workout recovery drink.

Dark-green leafy vegetables: These veggies like kale, spinach and collard greens offer iron and calcium. Pair these veggies up with foods high in vitamin C, or serve with meat to maximize the absorption of iron from the vegetables.

Orange fruits and vegetables: Loaded with vitamins C, E, A, and potassium, these help your immune system stay healthy.

How many of these foods are you getting on a regular basis?

Jill Castle, MS, RDN is a childhood nutrition expert and co-author of Fearless Feeding: How to Raise Healthy Eaters from High Chair to High School (www.fearlessfeeding.com). She is the creator of Just The Right Byte (www.justtherightbyte.com), and is working on her next book for young athletes, called Eat, Compete & Grow. She lives with her husband and four children in New Canaan, CT. Questions? Contact her at Jill@JillCastle.com.