

## What food does my child need to eat to support their training?

When considering the types of food needed to support training and growth, the focus is usually carbohydrate, fat, and protein. This is not to say other nutrients are less important, but it provides a useful starting point.

**Carbohydrate** is an extremely important fuel for exercising muscles and the brain. Unfortunately it can only be stored in small amounts within the body and therefore carbohydrate stores need to be replenished via your child's diet. The amount of carbohydrate required should align with the training demands and individual goals of your child. Typically this is expressed in relation to body mass (e.g., for a 50kg athlete, exercising ~1hr/day, this would equate to 250 – 350g carbohydrate per day).

Exercise Type	Description	Carbohydrate Intake
Light Exercise	Low intensity/skill based	3 to 5g/kg/d
Moderate Exercise	~1hr/d	5 to 7g/kg/d
High Exercise	1-3hr/d of mod-high intensity	6 to 10g/kg/d

**Fat** intake is important for several reasons including the provision of essential fatty acids, absorption of specific vitamins, and energy for growth. But the stores of fat in the body are plentiful, especially compared to carbohydrate, and as a result children are encouraged to adhere to public health guidelines. These typically recommend that fat intake comprises 20-35% of energy intake and saturated fat intake is restricted in preference for unsaturated fats from plant-based foods and fish.

**Protein** is important for growth and supporting your child's adaptations to training. The body is constantly breaking down and building new proteins and the intake of protein in the diet can support this process. Total protein intake is important but so is the type and timing of protein consumption. Current guidelines suggest that most athletes should consume 1.2 to 2.0g/kg/d of high quality protein (e.g., for a 50kg athlete this would equate to 60 – 100g protein per day).

The following guides can prove useful when trying to visualise how much carbohydrate and protein is provided by specific foods.

	Portion	Carbohydrate	Protein		Portion	Carbohydrate	Protein
Meat	100g	---	20g	Brown rice	½ cup (raw)	65g	5g
Chicken/turkey	Small fillet	---	20g	Wholemeal pasta	1 cup (raw)	65g	10g
Fresh fish	Small fillet	---	20g	Baked potato	1 med	40g	---
Tuna	½ can	---	15g	Breakfast cereal	1 cup	35g	5g
Semi-skimmed milk	1 glass	10g	10g	Porridge oats	½ cup	35g	5g
Low fat yogurt	1 pot (150g)	10g	10g	Wholegrain bread	2 med slice	30g	5g
Lower fat cheese	40g	---	10g	Wholemeal pitta	1 pitta	25g	5g
Eggs	2 med	---	15g	Jam/honey	Per slice	15g	---
Baked beans	½ tin	25g	10g	Fresh fruit juice	1 glass	20g	---
Nuts	3 tbsp	---	10g	Banana	medium	20g	---
Peanut butter	Per slice	---	5g	Other fresh fruit	1 portion	10g	---
Houmous	50g	10g	5g	Dried fruit	3 tbsp	20g	---
				Tinned fruit	½ tin	10g	---
				Sweetcorn	1 portion	10g	---
				Peas	1 portion	---	5g