



THERE'S A REASON FOR EACH SEASON Year-Round Nutrition Needs for Peak Performance

Any sports trainer will tell you the key to success is good nutrition and finding the proper balance between carbohydrates, fat and protein. Although nutrition and diet may be top-of-mind when teams are in-season, many people don't realize the importance of preseason and post-season routines. Sports nutritionist Lisa Dorfman, author of "Performance Nutrition for Football," offers this advice on maintaining optimal nutrition year-round:

Preseason - Preseason nutrition is a crucial link between the off-season and regular season – when intense workouts and important nutrition decisions really kick into high gear. The primary goals of preseason training are to maintain and build lean muscle, improve quickness and agility and **prepare the body to withstand the stress of season**. Maintaining the right balance of carbohydrates and protein helps prevent susceptibility to injury, illness and overtraining.

- **50-60% Carbohydrates.** Complex carbohydrates provide the most important fuel for playing football and are essential for endurance throughout training sessions.
- **15-25% Protein.** Many athletes require twice the daily allowance of protein during the preseason to maintain a balance between muscle breakdown and strength gains.
- **25-35% Fat.** Since high-intensity workouts require high calorie requirements, adding healthy fats from fish, almonds and olive oil can provide a nutrient dense source of calories.

In-Season - In-season training is all about maintaining the gains made during the preseason to keep up the energy and endurance to thrive during competition. Many of the nutritional practices from the preseason are maintained during in-season play.

- **55-65% Carbohydrates.** Players need to increase their carbohydrate consumption during in-season training in order to maintain their strength, energy, endurance and overall health. Pre-game meals are key to maintaining energy on the field, and should be eaten three to four hours prior to game time in order to ensure enough digestion time for these complex nutrients.
- **10-15% Protein.** Protein is important for the pregame meal to provide fuel that will last throughout four quarters of competition. Try to include 5-6 mini meals, with at least 6-8 ounces of lean meat or chicken at mealtime, 2-3 oz (14-24 grams protein) between meals to protect the body from breaking down and get the benefits during competition. After the game, protein is essential for muscle recovery. Shamrock Farms Rockin' Refuel™ is fortified with 20g of protein and provides a 2:1 carb to protein ratio, the ideal ratio for muscle recovery.
- **20-30% Fat.** Athletes should include good sources of omega 3 fats to reduce inflammation and support brain health and eat fewer high-fat foods before game time due to their lengthy digestion time, which can lead to bloating and feeling sluggish.

Off-Season - The off-season is the perfect time to work towards new training goals and get stronger, leaner, and more powerful. Strength and cardiovascular building are the two main goals during this time.

- **45-50% Carbohydrates.** Carbohydrate consumption changes from season, and depending on weight goals can be more or less than season, but it's important to focus on complex carbs found in whole grains, vegetables and fruits. Important vitamins and minerals in these foods help build a nutritious base and are assets for performance and recovery.
- **15-35% Protein.** Due to increased weightlifting and muscle building, protein needs are greater now than during the season. Foods such as meats, chicken, eggs, fish and low fat dairy are all good sources of protein.
- **20-35% Fat.** Fat provides a dense, long-term fuel source for energy. It helps the body absorb important fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K, which provide essential nutrients called omega 3s and omega 6s. The amount of fat players need to eat depends on their body composition, goals and energy needs.