

◆ Betsy's Summer Strong Edition ◆ JULY NUTRITION NEWS

BY BETSY MCNALLY, AUTHOR OF YOU CAN'T FLIP ON EMPTY

Halfway
Through...
Just Getting
Started!



Can you believe we're already halfway through summer?

While it may feel like the season is flying by, you still have weeks of training ahead. Every practice, every meal, and every good choice you make now is helping prepare you for a stronger competition season this fall.

This month, I want you to think beyond muscles.

Gymnastics is a brain sport just as much as it is a physical sport. Every routine requires focus, quick decision making, balance, body awareness, memory, confidence, and reaction time. Your brain is working just as hard as your body every single practice. The good news? You can feed your brain the same way you feed your muscles.



Here are four Brain Boosting Foods to add to your plate this month:

Blueberries

Packed with antioxidants that help protect brain cells and support memory and concentration.



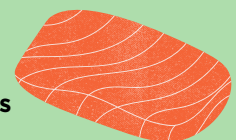
Leafy Greens

Spinach, kale, and other dark greens provide vitamins and nutrients that support learning, focus, and healthy brain function.



Omega 3 Foods

Salmon, tuna, walnuts, chia seeds, and flaxseed contain healthy fats that help your brain communicate quickly and efficiently. They're especially important for concentration and reaction time.



Colorful Fruits and Vegetables

The more colors on your plate, the more vitamins and antioxidants you're giving your brain to help it perform at its best.

Remember...

A strong body can only perform as well as the brain controlling it.

BRAIN BOOSTING BLUEBERRY POWER SMOOTHIE



Ingredients

1 cup milk (or your favorite dairy free milk)

½ cup Greek yogurt

1 cup frozen blueberries

1 handful fresh spinach

½ banana

1 tablespoon ground flaxseed or 2 tbs chia seeds

1 teaspoon honey (optional)

A few ice cubes



◆ Directions ◆

Blend until smooth and enjoy before a workout, after practice, or as a healthy snack.

This smoothie is loaded with protein, antioxidants, leafy greens, and Omega 3s to help fuel both your muscles and your mind.

CHALLENGE OF THE MONTH: SEE IF YOU CAN EAT ONE BRAIN BOOSTING FOOD EVERY SINGLE DAY IN JULY. YOUR BODY AND YOUR BRAIN WILL THANK YOU!

SKIP THE ENERGY DRINKS. FUEL REAL ENERGY INSTEAD!

Summer training is demanding, and it's tempting to reach for an energy drink when you're feeling tired. But for growing athletes, the best source of energy doesn't come from a can.

Recent recommendations from pediatric health experts continue to advise that children and teens avoid energy drinks because of their high caffeine content and added stimulants. Many popular energy drinks contain 200 to 300 mg of caffeine, while experts recommend that teens consume no more than 100 mg per day, and many pediatric organizations recommend avoiding them altogether. The under 10 crowd shouldn't drink caffeine at all according to these studies.

Dehydration of just 2% of your body weight can decrease athletic performance, concentration, reaction time, and coordination. Before reaching for caffeine, ask yourself one question: "Am I actually tired...or am I dehydrated?"

During the summer, gymnasts don't just sweat in the gym. Swimming, playing outside, biking, sports camps, beach days, and vacations all add up. By the time practice begins, many athletes are already behind on fluids.

Three Natural Energy Boosters

1. Hydrate Before You're Thirsty

Don't wait until practice to start drinking. Sip water throughout the day, especially if you've been outside. Add water rich foods like watermelon, strawberries, oranges, cucumbers, grapes, and tomatoes to help replace fluids naturally.



2. Replace the Electrolytes You Sweat Out

Potassium is one of the key minerals lost through sweat. It helps muscles contract properly and supports healthy nerve function. Great choices include bananas, potatoes, Greek yogurt, avocados, beans, and cantaloupe.



3. Choose Food That Gives Lasting Energy

Energy drinks provide a quick spike, but real food provides lasting fuel. Try Greek yogurt with berries, a banana with peanut butter, or whole grain toast with turkey before practice for steady energy that lasts.



Betsy's Summer Challenge

This week, skip the energy drinks and challenge yourself to:

- Carry a water bottle everywhere you go.
- Eat one water rich fruit or vegetable every day.
- Include one potassium rich food after practice.

Remember: The best energy doesn't come from caffeine. It comes from smart nutrition, proper hydration, and fueling your body consistently.

You Can't Flip on Empty.

SUMMER POWER SALAD



Ingredients

- Grilled chicken
- Mixed greens
- Strawberries
- Blueberries
- Cucumber
- Feta cheese
- Balsamic dressing



Why it works:

This meal provides protein for recovery, carbohydrates for energy, and plenty of fluids from the fruits and vegetables.

TROPICAL RECOVERY BOWL



Ingredients

- Rice or quinoa
- Grilled chicken or shrimp
- Mango
- Pineapple
- Avocado
- Red peppers
- Lime juice



Why it works:

Athletes get carbohydrates to refill energy stores, protein for recovery, healthy fats, and potassium rich fruits that support hydration.

ASK BETSY



Have a nutrition question?

Every month I'll answer one athlete question in the newsletter.

Some examples:

- **WHAT SHOULD I EAT BEFORE PRACTICE?**

- **IS BREAKFAST REALLY IMPORTANT?**

- **WHY AM I TIRED DURING WORKOUTS?**

- **WHAT SHOULD I PACK FOR A MEET?**

SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO YOUR COACH AND MAYBE YOURS WILL BE FEATURED NEXT MONTH!





THE FIFTH EVENT

At every camp I teach, I remind athletes that nutrition is the Fifth Event.

You practice vault.

You practice bars.

You practice beam.

You practice floor.

But the event that supports all four is nutrition.

The athletes who consistently fuel their bodies often have more energy, recover faster, stay healthier, and enjoy the sport more.

As you move through the second half of summer, keep showing up, keep working hard, and keep fueling your body.

Your future self will thank you.

Remember:

You Can't Flip on Empty.

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