

Fuelling For Performance – Youths & Adolescents (Ages 13-18)

For Players at F3 (Child) & T1-T3 Stages of the Gaelic Games Player Pathway

Food and fluids play a vital role in how the body functions – from how the brain processes information to how muscles perform and recover from training. Even small improvements in nutrition can lead to significant gains in health, performance, and development.

WHY OPTIMUM NUTRITION MATTERS

- Maintains high-level training and competition performance.
- Enhances recovery between sessions.
- Supports energy availability to reduce risk of overtraining.
- Helps achieve healthy body mass and composition.
- Supports immunity to reduce illness frequency and severity.
- Improves brain function for better focus, reaction time, and learning.

START WITH A 'FOOD FIRST' APPROACH

Use national healthy eating guidelines (The Food Pyramid or Eatwell Guide) as your foundation. Everyone's energy needs differ, and will vary daily depending on training, school, and life demands.

ENERGY DEFICIENCY – KNOW THE SIGNS

Short-Term Symptoms:

- Low energy or fatigue
- Poor concentration or mood
- Higher risk of illness and injury

PROLONGED SYMPTOMS:

- Decline in training performance
- Frequent or long-lasting illness
- Stress fractures or bone injuries
- Missed menstrual cycles
- Unexplained weight loss

BALANCED MEAL FRAMEWORK

Eating a varied diet helps ensure intake of macronutrients (carbohydrates, proteins and fats) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) needed for healthy body function. Each balanced meal should contain:

- **FUEL (whole grains):** Energy for movement
- **REPAIR (lean protein):** Muscle growth & repair
- **SUPPORT (fruit, veg, healthy fats):** Minimise wear & tear
- **HYDRATE (fluids):** Maintain fluid balance

The Athlete's Plate

The Athlete's Plate is a tool to help you adjust your eating based on your training load.



CARBOHYDRATE

Whole-grains: Cereal, pasta, rice, couscous, quinoa, bulgur wheat.

Potatoes: Baked, new, mashed, steamed, boiled, sweet potato.

Breads: Bread, pita, rolls, wraps, English muffins, crumpets.

Snacks: Malt loaf, currant buns, oat bars, dried fruit, fruit & nut bars.

PROTEIN & HEALTHY FATS

Poultry: Chicken, turkey.

Red meat: Beef, lamb, lean mince.

Fish: Cod, haddock, tuna, prawns, salmon, mackerel.

Vegetarian alternatives: Quorn, tofu, tempeh.

Milk & dairy: Milk, yoghurts, milkshakes, cheese, cottage cheese.

Beans & pulses: Kidney beans, baked beans, lentils, chickpeas, edamame beans.

Nuts & seeds: Nuts, seeds, peanut butter.

FRUIT & VEGETABLES

Green: Spinach, broccoli, kale, watercress, cabbage.

Orange: Carrots, sweet potato, cantaloupe, mangoes, butternut squash.

Yellow: Citrus fruits, peppers.

Red: Tomato, watermelon, pink grapefruit, red apples, red onions, pomegranates.

Purple: Berries, grapes, raisins, aubergine, plums, beetroot.

White: Onions, garlic, shallots, leeks, banana, cucumber, celery, mushrooms.

Sample Daily Meal Plan

MEAL TIME	Meal Components
Breakfast (7:30-8:30am)	High-fibre breakfast cereal Glass of fruit juice or piece of fruit 1-2 slices of toasted bread with peanut butter or jam
Mid-Morning Snack (11:00am)	Yoghurt and a piece of fruit Water to drink
Lunch (12:30-1:30pm)	Pitta pocket filled with tuna & sweetcorn, or ham, chicken, cheese, or egg salad Fruit smoothie or yoghurt Water to drink
After School Snack (3:45-4:45pm)	Glass of milk Slice of toast with peanut butter or jam
Dinner (6:30-7:00pm)	Meat, fish or vegetarian option with potatoes/pasta/rice, and vegetables Fresh fruit with yoghurt Water to drink
Supper (9:00-10:00pm)	Bowl of cereal or slice of toast with melted cheese or beans Glass of milk

All information is for guidance purposes only. For specific advice, please contact a suitably qualified professional.

For further information on how to manage hydration and nutrition changes whilst playing sport, visit the relevant stage of the Gaelic Games Player Pathway:

[https:// ladiesgaelic.ie/lgfa-hub/players/player-pathway/](https://ladiesgaelic.ie/lgfa-hub/players/player-pathway/) or
<https://camogie.ie/player-information/player-welfare>