Dear athletes and parents,

The purpose of this nutrition guide is to prepare distance runners for optimal performance. While the purpose of this guide is not to force you into a specific eating plan, it is intended to assist in making better food consumption choices not only for better distance running performance but a healthier lifestyle in general. This guide is not intended to be comprehensive in nature, just an introduction into learning healthy nutritional habits essential for distance running performance and overall wellbeing.

-Coach Alexander

**RULE #1: TOTAL CALORIES SHOULD NOT BE RESTRICTED - YOU WILL NEED TO EAT! WHEN IN DOUBT, EAT! THIS ARTICLE IS NOT ABOUT CALORIE COUNTING, IT IS ABOUT MAKING YOUR CALORIES COUNT!**

Example- A sedentary adult burns between 1,600-2,000 per day. High school distance runners are young and active therefore require more calories. Running one mile burns roughly 100 calories. You obviously run more than one mile a day, so EAT!

**Making the right choices:**

Americans today on average have very poor diets. Fast food, carbonated beverages (pop), and packaged snacks (candy) are prevalent, convenient, and affordable. However there are several ways to make better eating choices.

Breakfast example-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I see 1st period in my room on a typical day</th>
<th>A better choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iced White Chocolate Mocha w/ whipped cream</td>
<td>Oatmeal (1 cup) 339 calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12oz) 340 calories</td>
<td>Raisins (1.5oz-small box) 129 calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Honey (1oz) 86 calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muffin (1) 290-430 calories on average</td>
<td>Skim milk (8oz) 90 calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timbits (1) 50-70 calories on average</td>
<td>Banana (average size) 105 calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Bull (8oz) 110 calories</td>
<td>Orange juice (8oz) 102 calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total calories: 840- If you ate the least caloric</td>
<td>Total calories: 851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muffin and 2 Timbits (who eats just 2 Timbits).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both meals provide nearly an equal amount of calories to use as fuel for the body but the ultimate question is what is the better nutritional (macro & micronutrients, vitamins & minerals, etc.) choice?
Sound nutritional principles:

Eat breakfast
Make time to eat in the morning (before school or after conditioning in the summer). Skipping breakfast means the body has gone without food ~17 hours. This will prohibit the body from maintaining a balanced metabolism and contribute to overeating during remaining meals.

Proper hydration
Drink water, CONSTANTLY. Most people do not consume nearly enough water on a daily basis. Distance runners sweat in great quantities during a workout. Be an honors student, pass the pee test daily.

Urine Color Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th></th>
<th>2</th>
<th>If your urine matches the colors 1, 2, or 3, you are properly hydrated.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Continue to consume fluids at the recommended amounts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>If your urine color is below the RED line, you are DEHYDRATED and at risk for cramping and/or a heat illness!!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>YOU NEED TO DRINK MORE WATER!</td>
<td></td>
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<td>8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Replace high caloric beverages with water. Gatorade (or other sports related drinks) are fine after a workout to replace electrolytes and restore glycogen levels but generally are not needed more than an hour after a run.
Pepsi (12oz) = 150 calories (with no nutritional value) : Water (any amount) = 0

Sleep/rest for better overall health (including nutrition)
Easier said than done but getting 7-9 hours of sleep on average provides too many health benefits to mention. How does sleep relate nutrition? The old saying, “Nothing good happens after midnight,” applies. When has anyone consumed something healthy after midnight? You cannot eat if you are asleep. If you fear that late night junk food craving, try brushing your teeth earlier in the evening to avoid the junk food temptation. Why? Who really wants to brush their teeth more than they have to?
Plan of attack:

Think about what you NEED to eat, not what you can’t eat. Do not forbid any type of food (you will just obsess about it), just limit the consumption of poor nutritional choices.

Supper scenario:

Poor choice-
You come home after a hard practice and eat an entire row of Oreo cookies (or whatever junk food you crave). By the time supper is served you fail to finish your plate as you are now “full” placing vegetables and scraps of meat to the side. Two hours later you are hungry again, any supper leftovers are put away and you are too lazy to re-heat them so you grab the most convenient item and eat more junk food.

Better choice-
Eat a piece of fruit or cup of yogurt if you absolutely cannot wait until supper. Both are excellent post-workout snacks anyway. Get seconds of the main course or if not done prior to supper, eat a piece of fruit or cup of yogurt before eating a low nutritional value dessert. You do not have to avoid dessert, just eat a small slice of cake instead of half the cake.

What the body needs (macro view)
As a distance runner following the traditional food pyramid provides a sound nutritional plan, you just may have to alter (increase) the amount of food you eat due to the increased caloric expenditure while running.
**Eat the rainbow**
One does not need to have a degree in nutrition science to figure out what foods contain different vitamins and minerals. Just include a variety of colors in each meal to ensure you will be consuming a well-balanced diet in both macro- and micronutrients. Just think of the elementary school acronym “ROYGBIV” for remembering the colors of the rainbow and apply that to your plate/bowl of food.

**Simple vs. Complex Carbohydrates (not all carbs are created equal)**
You need both just in different amounts at different times.

Simple carbs are commonly found in pop, candy, and pastries but also in fruit. A simple rule on whether a simple carb source is good or bad for you is if it looks like it did when it was picked, plucked, or pulled from the earth (i.e. fruit & vegetables) go ahead and eat it. If it is processed, (i.e. brownies and cake do not come from the ground, pop does not flow in rivers, and candy bars do not grow on trees) it should be avoided on a regular basis.

Complex carbs include whole grains, vegetables, and beans. Complex carbs are almost always a solid nutritional food source especially for endurance athletes as they provided a consistent source of energy.

**Common sense planning**
Think ahead. If you know you are going to a BBQ restaurant for dinner, choose non-meat food items for breakfast and lunch. If you are going to a party in the evening where there will be nothing but junk food, skip that cookie for lunch.

Think back. Dinner is often the last chance to pack in needed nutrition. Reflect on what you have already consumed and fill in any gaps in the general nutritional plan.

**If you can’t see it, you can’t eat it**
In the distance running world you can’t catch (a competitor) what you can’t see, the same applies to junk food. Don’t buy food that has little nutritional benefit. If you do not have easy access to junk food you are unlikely to drive/walk to the store to get it.

**Make smart swaps**
Examples:
- Yogurt for ice cream
- Water for pop
- Fruit “nature’s candy”, nuts, or trail mix for typical candy

**Vitamins**
A multi-vitamin is a good way to make up for any deficiencies in your diet but it will not make up for a consistently poor diet. Take it with a meal for better absorption. If you have special circumstances (example- iron supplementation for anemia) consult a medical professional.
Refrigerator page listing foods that are generally good for you (not a complete listing by any means just idea starters):

As a rule of thumb the closer the thing you are about to eat looks like when it was growing (plant based) or living (animal based) the less processed it is and therefore the better it is for you.

Proteins
- Chicken
- Turkey
- Pork
- Fish
- Eggs
- Beef (leaner the better)
- Nuts (any kind is better than candy)
- Peanut butter

Dairy
- Milk (cow or plant/nut based)
- Yogurt (Greek offers more protein but regular is a great option too)
- Cottage cheese
- Low fat cheeses

Grains
- 100% whole grain cereals, pastas, bread trumps “enriched” grains
- Oatmeal
- Brown rice trumps white rice

Fruit/Vegetables
- Any fruit (remember ROYGBIV)
- Any vegetable (remember ROYGBIV)
- Fresh, frozen, canned or juice I don’t care, just eat and/or drink it

Beverages/liquids
- Water
- Fruit/vegetable juices
- Sports drink- limited to post-workout
- Most soups