

# Summa Center for Sports Health Newsletter



## Safe Weight Loss for High School Athletes

Weight loss or cutting weight can be a hot topic among many athletes - primarily those in wrestling, gymnastics, and other sports where it is beneficial to weigh less. While weight loss can be beneficial for competition if done safely, it can also be harmful to performance and can have potentially dangerous side-effects if not done correctly. Even slight dehydration causes decreases in mental and physical ability and can cause headaches, dizziness, muscle cramping and constipation. Chronic or severe dehydration can cause confusion, increased heart rate, kidney stones, and damage to the kidneys and muscles during exercise.



For more information, call toll-free (888) 778-6627 or visit us [online](#).

The following tips will help you successfully and safely lose weight to benefit athletic performance.

### 1) Don't wait until the last minute

Crash dieting or sudden weight loss can be devastating to athletic performance and dangerous for health. Weight loss done over the course of several weeks can not only be effective, but it can mean the difference between being adequately supplied with nutrients and water prior to competition. Try to begin a weight loss routine at least 1 to 2 months prior to the beginning of the season.

### 2) Choose the right foods

Your body needs fuel at all times to train, perform, and burn calories. Eating foods that are high in proteins, fiber, and carbs will keep you satisfied, help you recover from training and help maintain lean muscle mass. Avoid foods that are high in fats or processed foods like pizza and fast food. Instead opt for fresh fruit, granola bars or small amounts of whole grain and fast acting proteins like chocolate milk, yogurt, or fish.

### 3) Reduce Sodium

Excessive sodium consumption makes the body retain water. This adds weight but does not give you energy or make you stronger. Cutting out salty snacks like crackers and processed foods will help you shed excess water weight without causing dehydration. Replace the high sodium foods with foods that require you to chew like apples and high fiber cereals and energy bars.

### 4) Drink water

While water should be reduced immediately before any weigh-ins, water is an important part of any weight loss plan. Increasing water consumption when you begin to cut calories, will help keep your stomach full and fight hunger, help maintain peak performance, and condition your stomach to accept water when you need it before and during competition.

### 5) Recover appropriately

After weigh-ins make sure you are replenishing your water and energy stores appropriately. If weigh-ins are the day before competition, make sure you get a great night of sleep following a meal with plenty of carbohydrates, whole grains, and proteins. If weigh-ins are on the day of competition, energy packed snacks like peanut butter and jelly, granola or protein bars, and natural fruits and nuts can provide your body with much needed last-minute energy to get you through competition.

## **Skin Disease Prevention**

Skin diseases are a concern of any sport, especially ones in which athletes are in close contact with one another. Not only are they contagious, these diseases can prohibit participation. It is essential for coaches, parents, and athletes to do take proactive measures in order to prevent acquisition and transmission. Prophylactic measures and swift management of infections is an important part in the transmission of these agents. Following these recommendations can help do just that.

### **1. Clean all practice facilities and equipment following use.**

- Cleaning these items immediately after use helps minimize the growth of bacteria and germs.

### **2. Practice good hand hygiene**

- Wash hands with warm water and an antimicrobial soap whenever possible. When water is not available an alcohol based hand rub can be used.

### **3. Practice good overall hygiene**

- Similar to cleaning facilities and equipment, showering helps clean germs and bacteria off of the skin that may be with small cuts or abrasions.

### **4. Do not share personal items.**

- Sharing items such as towels, water bottles, clothing, and shoes increases the exposure to more infection and cross contamination. In turn this can lead to a potential outbreak within the team.

### **5. Report all cuts, scrapes, wounds, and skin lesions to the coach, parent, and athletic trainer for proper treatment.**

- Early detection of a skin lesion can lead to more effective treatment as well as decrease the risk of spreading the disease to others.

Taking these few steps can go a long way in the prevention of skin diseases and help ensure that everyone stays healthy during the season.



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