



AGES 8-18 + PARENTS

Free Athlete Kit

Simple habits for practices, games and the days between

Start with one habit this week. Use this guide together, and choose foods and routines that fit your family.

Eat regularly

Build meals around familiar foods. Pack a snack when practice overlaps a meal.

Bring water

Have a filled bottle, a refill plan and regular drink breaks. Hot days need extra planning.

Protect sleep

Ages 8-12: aim for 9-12 hours. Ages 13-18: aim for 8-10 hours each 24 hours. [4]

Recover and speak up

Plan rest. Tell a trusted adult about pain, dizziness, unusual tiredness or a head impact.

Your first move: Pick tomorrow's snack, fill your bottle and decide when you will start winding down.

General education, not an individual nutrition or medical plan. Parents: involve your child's clinician for health conditions, injuries, food allergies or ongoing concerns. Sources and links are on page 8.

Food that fits your day

Everyday food supports growing bodies and active days. [1-3]

Build a regular meal

Include a carbohydrate for fuel, a protein food for repair, fruit or vegetables, and some fat. Rice, potatoes, bread or oats can go with beans, eggs, tofu, fish or chicken. Add produce and foods such as olive oil, avocado or seeds.

Before practice

A meal about 3-4 hours before activity may feel comfortable. Closer to the start, try a smaller, easy-to-digest snack, such as a banana, toast, crackers or applesauce. Use practice days to learn what sits well. Timing is flexible.

After a hard session

Have water and a meal or snack with carbohydrate and protein within about an hour when practical. Try yogurt and fruit, an egg sandwich, or rice and beans. If a meal is coming soon, use that. Short, light play may not need extra snacks.

Make it work for your family

Frozen and canned produce, school meals and leftovers count. For lactose intolerance, try lactose-free milk. For dairy-free choices, ask about fortified alternatives; protein content varies. For allergies, check labels and cross-contact. Choose safe swaps with your clinician or dietitian.

Keep it food first. Skip energy drinks and pre-workout products. Ask a pediatric clinician or sports dietitian before using supplements. Avoid skipping meals to change body size. [1, 2]

Water and hot days

Make drinking and cooling breaks part of the plan. [2, 5, 6]

Before you leave

Drink regularly with meals and snacks. Bring a labeled water bottle and know where to refill it. Water is the usual first choice for routine practices.

During and after activity

Offer regular drink breaks; do not wait for strong thirst. Take comfortable sips and keep water available afterward. Needs vary with age, weather, sweat and effort. Never force large amounts: too much fluid can be dangerous.

Long or very sweaty sessions

For long, vigorous or very sweaty activity, ask a sports clinician or dietitian whether a sports drink would help. Energy drinks are different and are not appropriate for young athletes.

Adjust for heat

Adults: check conditions, provide cooling breaks, and shorten, move or cancel activity when needed. Water alone cannot make extreme heat safe.

Stop and tell an adult: headache, dizziness, nausea, weakness or cramps in the heat. Move to a cool place. Get prompt medical help if symptoms worsen, vomiting occurs or recovery is not quick. [6]

Call 911: confusion, collapse, seizures or inability to respond in the heat. While help comes, move to shade, remove excess clothing, wet skin with cool water and fan. Do not give drinks to someone confused, unconscious or unable to swallow safely. [6]

Sleep is part of training

Protect enough time to sleep, especially during busy weeks. [4]

AGES 8-12

9-12 hours

The full school-age recommendation covers ages 6-12.

AGES 13-18

8-10 hours

Recommended sleep each 24 hours, on a regular basis.

Work backward from the morning

Choose a realistic wake-up time. Leave enough time for sleep plus settling down. Keep bedtime and wake-up time fairly consistent across the week.

Build a simple wind-down

Pack tomorrow's bag, dim the lights and choose something quiet. Put screens away at least 30 minutes before bed. Keep the sleep space cool, dark and quiet. Avoid caffeine.

When the schedule gets crowded

Parents and athletes: discuss late practices, homework and early travel together. Protect sleep rather than adding another workout. If sleep problems, loud snoring or daytime sleepiness keep happening, ask a clinician for help.

Tonight's plan

Wind-down starts: _____ Wake-up: _____

Recovery and speaking up

Parents and coaches help athletes balance the whole week. [7, 8]

Build in time off

Plan 1-2 days each week away from competition and sport-specific training. AAP also advises 2-3 months off a specific sport each year, in month-long blocks if needed. Coordinate all teams to protect rest.

Share the full schedule

Share games, practices and other demands with the coach. Build training gradually with qualified coaching. Keep time for friends and life outside sport.

Do not train through pain

Temporary muscle tiredness can follow activity. Sharp pain, swelling, limping, pain at rest or persistent symptoms need attention. Stop, tell an adult and get appropriate clinical assessment.

Treat a possible concussion seriously

After a hit to the head or body, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance changes mean stop playing. Symptoms can appear later. Tell an adult and get medical assessment. No same-day return. Stay out until a healthcare provider clears you and guides your return.

Call 911 after a head impact for seizures, repeated vomiting, a worsening headache, trouble waking, slurred speech or increasing confusion. See CDC's full danger-sign list on page 8. [8]

Parents: Listen without blame. Ongoing fatigue, injuries, food worries or loss of enjoyment deserve attention from a pediatric clinician or registered dietitian.

Your game day checklist

Pack familiar choices and leave room for changes.

The night before

- ☐ Confirm arrival, location, weather and pickup.
- ☐ Pack uniform, suitable shoes and required protective equipment.
- ☐ Choose a familiar meal or snack for the timing of the event.
- ☐ Set your wind-down and wake-up times.

In the bag

- ☐ Labeled water bottle and refill plan.
- ☐ Easy snack plus a meal plan for long days. Keep perishable food cold in an insulated bag.
- ☐ Extra clothes, sun protection and any sport-specific gear.
- ☐ Prescribed rescue medicine, if needed, according to the athlete's existing care plan; adult contact details.

At the event

- ☐ Tell the coach how you feel. Warm up with the team.
- ☐ Take drink and cooling breaks. Report pain or illness early.
- ☐ Afterward: eat, drink, change out of wet gear and leave time to recover.

Parent check-in: "How did your body feel? What was fun? What would help next time?"

Your weekly habit sheet

Print this page. Choose two habits to practice, not a perfect score.

Week of: _____

Choose or write your habits

Pack a snack · Bring water · Start wind-down
Speak up about how I feel · Follow the rest plan

Habit A: _____

Habit B: _____

Habit	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Habit A	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Habit B	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Check a box when you practiced your habit. A missed day is information, not a failure. Adjust and try again.

One thing that helped

One change for next week

Keep this sheet at home. There is no need to record food amounts, body measurements or performance scores.

Keep building your habits

Questions about training? Connect with Ejay at iRISE.

EXPLORE A FREE WEEK

Ejay Jackson · iRISE PERFORMANCE

913-961-7920 · ejackson@irisehw.com

5350 Martindale Rd, Shawnee, KS 66218

Sources and further reading

Links checked October 10, 2026. Source numbers match the guide. These organizations do not endorse iRISE.

1 · Nemours KidsHealth

[Feeding Your Child Athlete](#)

2 · American Academy of Pediatrics

[Sports Nutrition for Busy Families](#)

3 · UCSF Benioff Children's Hospitals

[Fueling Your Workout](#)

4 · AASM and CDC

[Sleep Duration](#) · [Healthy Sleep Habits](#)

5 · American Academy of Pediatrics

[Choose Water for Healthy Hydration](#)

6 · CDC

[Heat Illness First Aid](#)

6 · CDC Yellow Book

[Heat Illness and Overhydration](#)

7 · American Academy of Pediatrics

[Overuse Injuries and Burnout](#)

8 · CDC HEADS UP

[Responding to a Concussion](#)

8 · CDC HEADS UP

[Concussion Symptoms and Danger Signs](#)