

Nutrition and Sample Meal Plans

Performance goal	Strong food choices	Why they help	Best time
Muscle recovery	Chicken, turkey, lean beef, eggs, fish, Greek yogurt, milk, cottage cheese, beans, tofu	Supplies protein needed to repair and rebuild muscle	Include at every meal and after practice
Restore energy after practice	Rice, potatoes, pasta, oats, bread, tortillas, fruit, cereal, chocolate milk	Replaces carbohydrate stored in the muscles and supplies energy for the next workout	Within 30–120 minutes after practice
Quick pre-practice energy	Banana, applesauce, pretzels, toast with honey, fig bars, bagels, dry cereal	Easily digested carbohydrates provide quick fuel without feeling overly heavy	Approximately 30–90 minutes before practice
Long-lasting energy	Oatmeal, whole-grain bread, brown or white rice, potatoes, pasta, beans, fruit	Provides carbohydrates for school, training, and competition	Breakfast, lunch, and meals several hours before practice

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Stamina	Rice or pasta with lean meat, oatmeal with fruit and yogurt, turkey sandwiches, potatoes with chicken	Combines carbohydrates for energy with protein for sustained recovery	Regular meals and 2–4 hours before hard training
Focus and concentration	Eggs, oatmeal, whole grains, berries, bananas, yogurt, nuts, water	Provides steady energy and nutrients without a large sugar spike and crash	Breakfast and school lunch
Brain health	Salmon, trout, canned light tuna, eggs, walnuts, berries, leafy greens	Provides omega-3 fats, choline, iron, iodine, and other nutrients involved in brain health	Regular meals throughout the week
Gut health	Yogurt or kefir with live cultures, oatmeal, bananas, berries, vegetables, beans, whole grains	Supplies beneficial bacteria and fiber that support digestion	Daily, but limit large amounts of fiber immediately before competition
Hydration	Water, milk, fruit, soup, electrolyte drinks when appropriate	Replaces fluids; milk also supplies protein and carbohydrates	Throughout the day and after practice

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Bone health	Milk, Greek yogurt, cheese, fortified dairy alternatives, eggs, salmon	Provides calcium, vitamin D, and protein for growing bones	Two or more meals/snacks throughout the day
Iron and oxygen delivery	Lean beef, turkey, beans, lentils, fortified cereal, spinach paired with oranges or berries	Iron supports healthy red blood cells, energy, and concentration	Regular meals; especially important for female wrestlers
Immune health	Berries, oranges, bananas, peppers, broccoli, yogurt, eggs, lean meat	Supplies vitamins, minerals, protein, and antioxidants	Include several colors of fruits and vegetables daily
Healthy calories for larger wrestlers	Peanut butter, nuts, avocado, olive oil, trail mix, whole milk, smoothies	Adds nutritious energy without requiring extremely large meals	Meals and snacks, but not immediately before wrestling
Tournament fuel	Bananas, applesauce, pretzels, bagels, turkey sandwiches, rice, cereal bars	Portable, familiar, and relatively easy to digest	After weigh-in and between matches

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Sample Meal Plans for a High-School Wrestler

These plans support school, growth, practice, competition, and recovery. They are not “weight-cutting” diets. Rapid food restriction, dehydration, sweat suits, saunas, or skipping fluids can reduce strength and endurance and cause serious medical problems. Wrestlers should follow their school-approved weight-management plan. [NFHS guidance](#) and [American Academy of Pediatrics guidance](#) emphasize gradual, properly supervised weight management.

Simple Portion Guide

At most meals, include:

- **Protein:** 1–2 palm-sized portions
- **Carbohydrate:** 1–3 cupped-hand portions
- **Fruit or vegetables:** 1–2 fist-sized portions
- **Healthy fat:** 1 thumb-sized portion
- **Drink:** Water, milk, or a suitable dairy alternative

Larger wrestlers and athletes completing long, intense practices generally need larger portions. Add carbohydrates on hard practice and competition days.

Plan 1: Regular Afternoon Practice Day

Breakfast

- Oatmeal made with milk
- Banana or berries
- Two eggs
- Water

Morning snack

- Greek yogurt
- Granola or whole-grain cereal

School lunch

- Turkey-and-cheese sandwich on whole-grain bread
- Carrots or another vegetable
- Apple
- Pretzels
- Milk or water

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60–90 minutes before practice

- Banana
- Granola bar, fig bar, or applesauce pouch
- Water

Immediately after practice

- Chocolate milk or a yogurt smoothie
- Banana, cereal bar, or pretzels

Dinner

- Grilled chicken, lean beef, fish, or beans
- Rice, potatoes, pasta, or tortillas
- Vegetables
- Fruit
- Milk or water

Evening snack, if hungry

- Cereal with milk
- Greek yogurt and fruit
- Peanut-butter toast

Plan 2: Dual-Meet Day

You may have to skip breakfast and/or lunch to make weight.

Breakfast

- Whole-grain bagel
- Scrambled eggs
- Orange or banana
- Milk or water

Morning snack

- Cheese stick
- Crackers
- Fruit

Lunch

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- Chicken-and-rice bowl or turkey sandwich
- Fruit
- Vegetables
- Water

Two to three hours before weigh-in

- Applesauce pouch, banana, or fig bar
- Water as needed

After weigh-in

Choose foods that digest easily:

- Water or an electrolyte drink
- Banana or applesauce
- Pretzels or crackers
- Half a turkey sandwich if there is enough time before wrestling

Between matches

- Small sips of fluid
- Banana
- Pretzels
- Applesauce pouch
- Granola or cereal bar

After the meet

- Burrito bowl with rice, chicken or beef, beans, cheese, and vegetables
- Milk or water
- Fruit

Avoid greasy fast food immediately before competing.

Plan 3: Tournament Day

Three to four hours before competition, assuming your weight allows for a snack.

- Oatmeal with banana and honey
- Two eggs or Greek yogurt
- Toast or bagel
- Water

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After weigh-in

- Water plus an electrolyte drink if appropriate
- Banana or applesauce
- Pretzels
- Turkey sandwich, bagel, or peanut-butter-and-honey sandwich

Between matches

Eat small amounts rather than one heavy meal:

- Fruit
- Pretzels or crackers
- Fig bars
- Dry cereal
- Applesauce
- Half sandwich
- Sports drink during a long, sweaty tournament

Long break between sessions

- Turkey wrap
- Rice-and-chicken bowl
- Baked chips or pretzels
- Fruit
- Water

Post-tournament recovery

- Chocolate milk or smoothie
 - Full meal containing protein, rice/pasta/potatoes, vegetables, and fruit
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Plan 4: Morning Practice Day

30–45 minutes before practice

- Banana or applesauce pouch
- Toast with honey
- Water

Full breakfast after practice

- Eggs
- Oatmeal or whole-grain toast

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- Fruit
- Milk or yogurt

Lunch

- Lean-beef or turkey tacos
- Rice and beans
- Fruit
- Water

Afternoon snack

- Greek yogurt and granola
- Peanut-butter sandwich
- Cheese, crackers, and fruit

Dinner

- Spaghetti with lean meat sauce
 - Salad or vegetables
 - Fruit
 - Milk or water
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Plan 5: Recovery or Rest Day

Carbohydrate portions can be slightly smaller than on competition days, but you should still eat regular meals.

Breakfast

- Eggs
- Whole-grain toast
- Fruit
- Milk

Snack

- Greek yogurt or cottage cheese
- Berries

Lunch

- Grilled-chicken wrap
- Vegetables

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- Fruit
- Water

Snack

- Apple with peanut butter
- Cheese stick

Dinner

- Salmon, chicken, lean beef, or beans
- Rice or baked potato
- Large serving of vegetables
- Milk or water

Evening snack

- Yogurt
- Cereal with milk
- Fruit and nuts

Hydration Basics

- Carry a water bottle throughout school.
- Start practice hydrated; urine should generally be light yellow.
- Drink regularly during practice without forcing excessive fluids.
- Water is normally the first choice. A sports drink may help during prolonged, intense, sweaty activity lasting more than about an hour. Energy drinks are not recommended for teenagers. [AAP hydration guidance](#)
- After practice, replace fluids and eat a recovery snack containing carbohydrates and protein within approximately two hours. [NATA fluid-replacement guidance](#)