Cutting Weight: Safe Approaches to Stay Strong

What about cutting weight?

Sometimes a teen athlete or a coach feels that weight loss would help with performance. Sometimes a certain weight is needed to compete. Cutting weight can be tricky for teen-agers because you are still growing and maturing. The best time to make weight changes is in the off-season for your sport.

Over-concern with weight may affect self-esteem or occasionally lead to disordered eating behaviors.

Remember that it is more important to feel well, perform well and stay strong than to look a certain way or reach a certain weight.

Healthy Eating Approaches:

• Eat breakfast daily
• Do not skip meals
• Move away from sugary, high calorie beverages such as sodas, energy drinks and fruit juice
• Eat less fried food
• Eat mindfully – eat slowly, enjoy meals and snacks, focus on hunger and fullness cues
• Focus on fruits and vegetables
• Go light on gravies, sauces and extras such as shredded cheese and dressing
• Whenever possible, let a regularly scheduled meal serve as pre-game or recovery nutrition
• If you aren’t sure that you are taking a healthy approach, check in with a Registered Dietitian
Simple Swaps to Cut Calories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead Of…</th>
<th>Try…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole or 2% milk</td>
<td>Fat-free (skim) milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granola</td>
<td>Cheerios or Wheat Chex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premium ice cream</td>
<td>Regular ice cream or frozen yogurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepperoni pizza</td>
<td>Cheese or veggie pizza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Mac</td>
<td>Regular cheeseburger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large fries</td>
<td>Small fries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meatball sub</td>
<td>Turkey sub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fried chicken breast</td>
<td>Grilled or roasted chicken breast</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signs that You Might be Losing Too Much Weight:

- Irritability or other changes from usual personality
- Rapid weight loss
- Decreased energy level in practice and daily activities
- Not wanting to participate in team pizza nights or other food related activities
- Lack of expected growth
- Increase in stress fractures and illnesses

Making Weight for Competition (Start about 2 days before weigh in)

- Taper training
- Eat lower fiber foods (white bread, Rice Krispies or Corn Flakes, canned fruits, cooked veggies, white rice or pasta)
- No added salt, limit salty foods like chips and cured meats

© 2016 Kathleen Searles, MS, RDN, CSSD, LDN

www.lunchbox-nutritionist.com