

ATHLETES WITH LOSS OF APPETITE

An athlete's goal is to fuel the body with proper nutrition required to meet individual energy needs. However, for some athletes, appetite and energy demands don't match-up. Should athletes only eat if they are hungry or should they fuel their bodies regardless of hunger cues?

While athletes should pay attention to hunger and fullness cues in order to be mindful of their bodies, sometimes athletes struggle with a loss of appetite. This can be caused by over training, stress, fatigue, and other factors. It can lead to an imbalance of energy (calories) for the amount of activity, ultimately resulting in under fueling. For this reason, if an athlete is training, they must eat and provide their body with adequate fuel despite feeling hungry or not.



Examples of energy-dense foods:

- Peanut butter filled pretzels or crackers
- Peanut butter and jelly sandwich/bagel
- High-protein, whole grain granola
- High-calorie energy/protein bars
- Homemade energy bites
- Trail mix
- Nuts
- Full-fat dairy foods

TIP 1: Add peanut butter to oatmeal, waffles, pancakes, muffins, or as a dip for fruits

TIP 2: Add avocado to sandwiches, wraps, burgers, salads, or use as a dip for crackers and pita



It can be hard to eat when you don't feel hungry, but here are three simple strategies you can use to fuel your body without feeling miserable:

1. Eat smaller, more frequent meals and snacks so not as much food needs to be consumed at one time.
 - Set alarms on your phone or computer as a reminder that it's time to eat.
 - Pack multiple snacks to bring to school and practice.
 - Pack foods like trail mix or whole grain granola that you can nibble on throughout the day in addition to meals.
2. Fuel the body with nutrient-rich fluids to add calories and protein.
 - Drink milk or chocolate milk at and/or between meals.
 - Fuel with smoothies made with milk, yogurt, fruit, and nut butters as snacks.
 - Have ready-to-drink shakes available for fueling in a hurry.
3. Consume more energy-dense foods (more calories per bite).
 - Instead of eating more food, you can choose foods higher in calories.
 - Good fats provide more calories per gram (or bite) than carbohydrates and protein, so they can help add calories to your day.
 - If you're experiencing a loss of appetite, you should still focus on consuming high-quality, nutrient-rich foods versus relying on less nutritious options.