

First Strides Nutrition Q&A

with Breana Lai, M.P.H., R.D., Test Kitchen Manager at EatingWell

Does peanut butter count as a protein?

Yes, peanut butter is a great non-meat, shelf-stable source of protein. It has 8 grams of protein per 2 Tbsp., which is almost the same amount as 1 ounce of chicken. Other plant-based sources of protein are beans (15g per cup), cheese (8g per ounce) and quinoa (8g per cup).

Does tofu have any value as a fuel or nutritious food? It's so white!

Not all white foods are bad! Potatoes are a good source of potassium, fiber, vitamin C and vitamin B6. Cauliflower, parsnips, white beans and yogurt are all white too 😊 Tofu is another plant-based source of protein that contains 10g per ½ cup. Its culinary versatility is pretty amazing too. Whiz into smoothies or whip into puddings or pies for a protein boost. Or try one of my favorite recipes: Turkey Ma Po Tofu:

<http://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/250763/turkey-ma-po-tofu/>

What do you recommend as a recovery drink on hot, humid days when water just isn't enough? (Must be lactose-free.)

For hard workouts, sports drinks have their place. Gatorade and Powerade are filled with electrolytes, such as sodium, potassium, calcium and magnesium, to help aid recovery. There's also new electrolyte sport drinks from Honest Tea. These are organic and not too sweet. My personal favorite is really cold, plain coconut water. It has 50 calories, as much potassium as a small banana and is incredibly refreshing.

What is a recommended breakfast before a run or a race (food, fluids, quantities)?

It depends on the length of a race and what you typically consume before running. If you never eat breakfast before a run, race day is not the time to start! For shorter runs, like a 5K or less, a small balanced breakfast of a simple carb, complex carb, protein and fat is ideal. You can easily achieve this with a small smoothie, an energy bar or a banana or apple with peanut butter. For longer runs, a 10K or longer, a slightly larger breakfast or a small breakfast followed with a few supplemental calories during the race may work best for you. Consistent sips of, not heavy loads of, fluids are important too. Try to eat at least an hour before the race so your food has time to digest. And even more important? Making sure you ate well the day before your race.

Best quick protein?

Quick-to-grab protein: jerky, string cheese, chickpea snacks, hummus packs, Greek yogurt, nuts

What is the best "whole" food to eat after a workout instead of a protein drink or bar?

Fruits and veggies! Apples, bananas, carrots, watermelon, cucumbers...ideally something that has natural sugars, fiber and a high water content.

What are some options for protein in veggie/fruit smoothies if I don't like peanut butter?

<http://www.eatingwell.com/recipes/18611/drinks/smoothies/protein/>

What's the latest info on coconut oil? OK? Not OK?

<http://www.eatingwell.com/article/290363/confused-by-coconut-oil-is-it-good-or-bad-for-your-health-heres-what-the-science-says/>

Butter seems like a whole food. Why is it less healthy than "healthy fats"?

http://www.eatingwell.com/diet_health/nutrition_news_information/what_are_good_fats_and_bad_fats/