

The Plant-Based Athlete

The following are examples of plant-based foods, including animal protein products and supplements.

Food is Fuel!

Meeting energy requirements is critical for gaining the proper nutrition to optimize training, performance and recovery.

Some plant-based energy sources include:

- Nuts and seeds
- Dried fruit
- Avocado
- Oils and nut butters
- Legumes, peas and beans (soy, tofu, chickpeas, kidney beans, black beans, etc.)

Protein

Pairing plant protein sources with select animal protein products can ensure you meet your protein requirements. One serving should contain anywhere between 14-21 grams of protein.

Try the following combinations:

- Grains + legumes OR Grains + nuts/seeds OR Grains + animal protein (if vegetarian)
Examples: milk, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese, eggs, beans, peas, lentils, tofu, tempeh, soy products (veggie burgers), nuts and seeds, plant-based milks, rice, quinoa, whole grains

Nutrients of Concern

Certain nutrients are found less abundantly in plant-based diets; therefore, supplementation may be indicated. See examples of food sources for each of the following nutrients:

- **Iron** – legumes, enriched cereals and breads, dark leafy greens, nuts, dried fruits, tofu. Absorption is enhanced by consuming along with a source of vitamin C such as citrus fruits, berries, tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, broccoli
- **Calcium** – calcium-fortified soy beverage, calcium-fortified orange juice, cooked beans, tahini, dried figs, dark green leafy vegetables, milk, yogurt, cheese
- **Vitamin D** – fortified soy beverage, fatty fish, sun exposure
- **Vitamin B12** – Red Star nutritional yeast, milk and milk products
- **Riboflavin** – leafy green vegetables, mushrooms, whole grains, fortified soy beverage
- **Zinc** – yeast breads, roasted nuts/seeds, whole grains, tofu, miso, oysters and fish
- **Omega-3 fatty acids** – fortified eggs, fish, walnuts, chia seeds, hemp seeds, flaxseeds

For more information, visit sport-med.ucalgary.ca/services/nutrition