

# Athlete Special Diet Nutrition

This playbook provides a structured approach to planning and maintaining nutrition for athletes who have special dietary needs such as gluten-free, dairy-free, or vegan diets. It offers strategies to ensure they receive all necessary nutrients for optimal performance.

## Step 1: **Assess Needs**

Determine the athlete's specific dietary restrictions, preferences, and nutritional requirements based on their sport and health goals.

## Step 2: **Research Foods**

Identify a list of whole and fortified foods that meet the athlete's dietary restrictions and nutritional needs. This may include gluten-free grains, plant-based protein sources for vegans, or non-dairy calcium-rich foods for those avoiding dairy.

## Step 3: **Plan Meals**

Develop a meal plan that incorporates a variety of foods identified in the research phase. The plan should include balanced meals and snacks tailored to the athlete's schedule, training intensity, and caloric needs.

## Step 4: **Supplement Wisely**

Consider nutritional supplements if there are any unavoidable deficiencies in the diet. Supplements should be chosen based on safety, efficacy, and compliance with anti-doping regulations.

## Step 5: **Monitor Health**

Regularly evaluate the athlete's health and performance, including monitoring body weight, energy levels, and any nutrient deficiencies or excesses, adjusting the dietary plan accordingly.

## Step 6: **Educate Continuously**

Provide ongoing education for the athlete regarding their diet's impact on performance. Stay updated on the latest research and adjust strategies as necessary.

# **General Notes**

## **Anti-Doping Compliance**

Always ensure that any supplements used are compliant with anti-doping regulations and have been tested for banned substances.

## **Medical Collaboration**

Work in collaboration with a registered dietitian and/or a sports nutritionist to tailor the diet to the athlete's individual needs and ensure nutritional adequacy.