



Dr. Jason E. Barker
OPTIMIZING YOUR FITNESS AND HEALTH, NATURALLY
503-524-9040 | JB@DRJASONBARKER.COM

The Natural Athlete Newsletter May/June '07

Anemia in Athletes

Both female and male athletes can be prone to anemia, which can be a fairly serious condition with many side effects. What is anemia? There are two main kinds of anemia, one of which involves a relative lack of iron that in turn keeps the body from making enough red blood cells. The other kind involves a lack of either folate or vitamin B-12, both common B vitamins. This kind of anemia leads to the production of oversized red blood cells, which do not function correctly. The end result of both of these conditions is that red blood cells cannot properly deliver oxygen to the cells of the body, or perform other energy-related tasks.

While folate and B-12 anemia is relatively rare (this may be more common in strict vegetarians), iron deficiency anemia is much more common. Athletes, and runners especially are prone to iron deficiency anemia for several reasons; iron is lost in the sweat and iron may be lost through the slight blood loss that can occur in a runner's gut over time. Dietary deficiency can occur relatively easy as well.

The main symptom of anemia is fatigue. While there are many causes of fatigue, anemia should be high on the suspected cause list. Only a doctor can diagnose anemia through a series of blood tests; self-treatment with iron or other supplements may mask the real problem (anemia can be a sign of serious disease as well...) or even lead to overdosing of supplements.

If you suspect that you have anemia, see a healthcare professional before taking any supplements, and get it taken care of. Exercising with anemia is a real drag, and getting checked out for this and other nutrient-deficiency conditions is a good idea especially as the summer season is in full swing.

The Major Food Groups & What They Do For You

All foods, no matter what they are, will fall into 3 main categories:

- Carbohydrates:

Serve as the body's main fuel source at all times, ingesting them will maintain blood sugar levels. Carbs are essential for replacing glycogen, the body's stored form of fuel. Athletes need to ingest about 8 grams per kilogram of body weight per day. Note: your body weight in kilograms is found by dividing pounds by 2.2. Example: 170 pounds/2.2 = 77.77 kilograms x 8 grams of carb = 616 grams of carbs per day. Or, carbohydrates should comprise about 55% to 58% of your total energy intake per day. Examples include sports drinks, breads, pasta, cereal, fruits and vegetables.

- Protein:

Builds and repairs lean body tissues (muscles, tendons, ligaments, cartilage). Serves as an extra source of fuel when carbs and fats run low. Need to replace what has been used or lean tissue will decrease. This equals injury. Athletes need roughly 1.5 grams per kilogram body weight per day, or about 12% to 15% of your total energy intake per day. Examples include animal flesh, protein powder, nuts/seeds, soy (tofu), beans & rice, and others.

- Fat:

Is an important energy source for endurance athletes. It is also essential for maintaining hormone and immune health. Fats should comprise about 20%-25% of your total energy intake each day. Fat is good for endurance athletes! They are typically 'hidden' in other foods such as animal products, dairy foods, dressings, muffins, cakes, and fast food. Healthy fats are found in fish, olive oil, nuts and seeds and avocados.

Feeling out of balance or confused about all of the diet information out there? Dr. Barker offers nutrition consultations for athletes looking to maximize their energy.

Dr. Barker Provides Medical Support for the Helvetia Half

I am happy to be providing medical support at the upcoming Helvetia Half on June 9th. The race was voted as the best local half marathon in 2006; its going to be a great time again this year!

For more information on this event, go to [runwithpaula](http://runwithpaula.com)

Contact Information:

Clinic Address

Back In Motion Sports Injuries Clinic
11385 SW Scholls Ferry Road
Beaverton, OR 97008

[Map](#)

Phone

503.524.9040

Web

www.DrJasonBarker.com
www.bimsportsinjuries.com.com

Email

JB@DrJasonBarker.com

[Learn about my practice style](#)

[Types of treatment](#)

[Newsletter Archives](#)

Diet Tip:

The anabolic window is known as the first 30 minutes immediately after an exercise bout. These 30 minutes are given this name because the body switches into an anabolic, or growth & repair state. It is very important that the majority of your refueling takes place in this time frame in order to maximize recovery, replace fuel that has been used, and to provide all of the necessary nutrients for the body to properly repair itself.

Remember, gains from training actually occur during the rest period - therefore it is important to prepare the body with what it needs. During the anabolic window, the body is in a state in which it becomes very efficient at absorbing all of those nutrients included in the post-workout/event meal. Make sure your meal is comprised of a balanced amount of carbohydrates, protein and fat. Also, don't forget to hydrate as well!

Have a sports nutrition question?

[Please ask!](#)

The Natural Athlete Newsletter is sent every 2 months. We will respect your privacy by not distributing your email in any way.