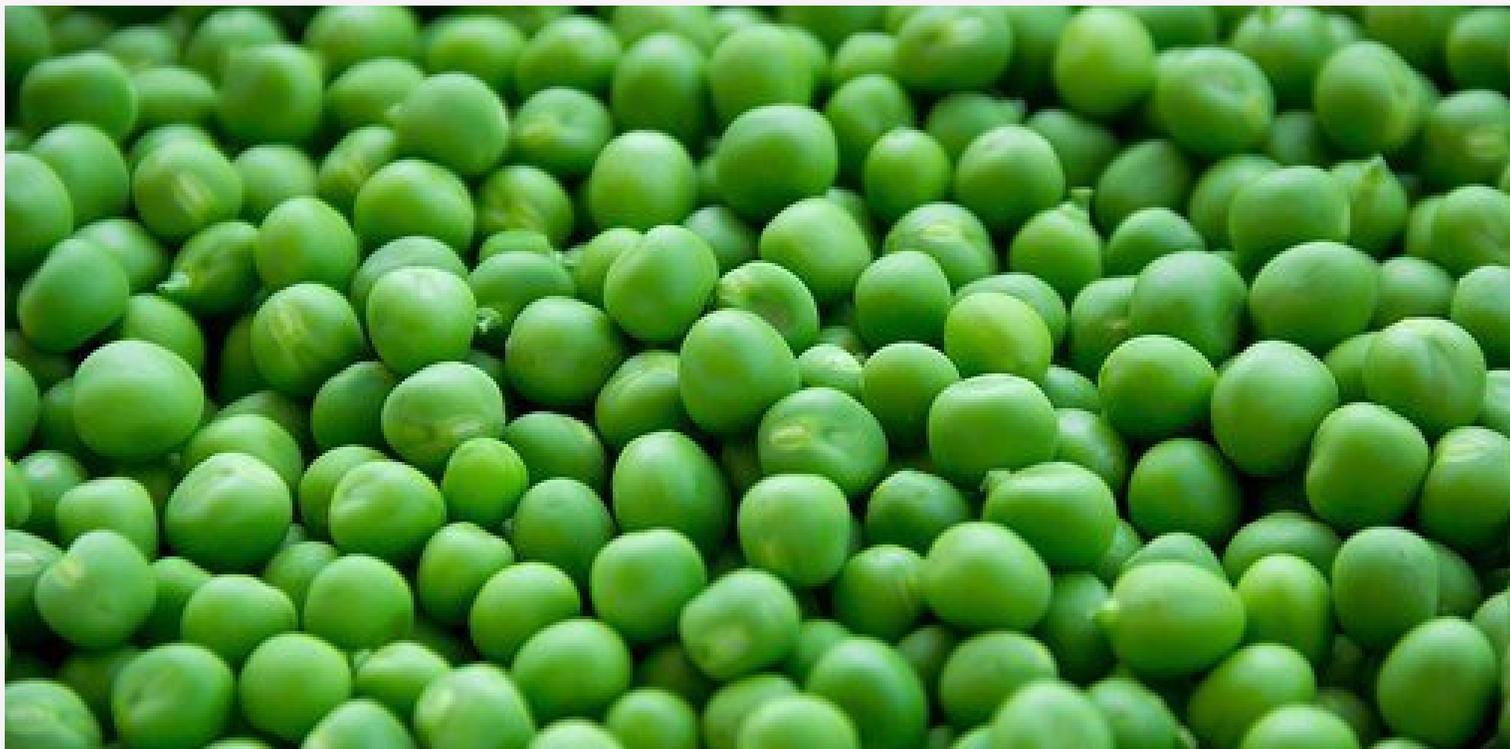


# BETSY'S GYMNASTICS KITCHEN- MARCH

*The Monthly Newsletter for Gymnasts and Families*



## WHAT'S IN THE NEWS? PEAS, PROTEIN AND COMPETITION SNACK BAG!

*by Betsy McNally Laouar*

Happy March! This Month's News will be abundant with information pertinent to your gymnast during the competition season. The food of the month is the glorious PEA! Also, We will discuss how much protein your athlete is getting (is it enough?) and what you should have in your competition snack bag! Let's go March!

PEAS HAVE 4 GRAMS OF  
PROTEIN PER SERVING

IF IT'S GREEN  
IT'S GOOD!



# FOOD OF THE MONTH: PEAS

## *Mom Was Right!*

High in protein, fiber and antioxidants, my article today explains why you should add peas to your athlete's diet.

When I was a child, I refused to eat peas. I don't know why, but I absolutely HATED their taste. But my mom kept putting them in front of me!!! She kept telling me how good they were! They were so sweet to me, almost like candy, and my mom always bought the frozen kind. When I ate them I would gag!

40 some odd years later, the more I read about peas, the more I learn to love them. And I actually do like them now, but only in a savory, spicy or salty way!

Peas are a superfood for athletes. NOTE: Most of the stats I'm sharing come from the health line article "Why Green Peas are Healthy and Nutrition" by Brianna Elliot, RD.

First let me say that there is a big misconception that peas are vegetables. They are actually legumes, which means they are seeds that come from "pods" that come from the *Pisum sativum* plant.

Peas contain the following per 1/2 cup serving:

Carbs: 11 grams

Fiber 4 grams

Protein 4 grams (pretty good)

Vitamin A, 34%, Vit K 24% and Vit C 13% of the RDI

Folate 12% (Bones, Immunity)

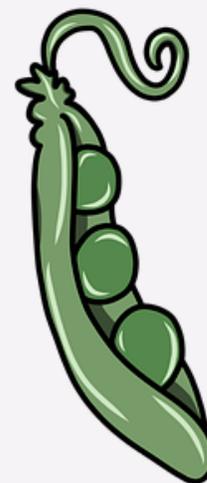
Iron 7% (Blood flow, cardiovascular health)

These stats reveal that peas are an excellent addition to any athlete's meal plan because they are high in complex carbohydrates (energy) protein (repair) and vitamins and minerals that aid in blood flow and muscle action. They also hold immunity boosting properties!

Peas are low on the glycemic index which means they help maintain blood sugar. This insures constant energy through long workouts. Fiber is also abundant and will help digestive and intestinal fortitude. Peas are also high in antioxidants and have anti-inflammation properties= less sore gymnasts! DISCLAIMER: Peas are known to contain some "anti-nutrients" that interfere with the absorption of certain vitamins and minerals and can impair proper digestion which may cause stomach distress, gas or bloating. Be sure to cook your legumes well before ingesting and eat only 1/2 cup or less per serving!



**EAT YOUR PEAS!  
MOM WAS  
RIGHT, PEAS ARE  
GOOD!**



# HOW TO EAT YOUR PEAS!

Betsy's 5 TOP WAYS TO EAT PEAS:

1) Snack on sugar snap peas with fresh hummus, guacamole and Greek yogurt dips

2) Add peas to salads and shakes for an added protein punch (this probably would have been the best way for my mom to deliver them into my mouth)

3) Roast Peas in the oven. You can use frozen or fresh, add sea salt, olive oil and spice and bake at 400 degrees for 20 minutes! YUM!

4) Snack on dried peas: My favorite combine is pecans, dried peas and dried cranberries. You can find dried peas in the health food section in most grocers bulk food area.

5) Split pea soup? YUM! Definitely good for those snowy Saturdays!

## OTHER GREAT PROTEIN PACKED LEGUMES?

Peanuts, Soy beans, Chick Peas, Lentils, Kidney Beans, Black eyed peas! (Hummus and Peanut Butter anyone?)



**HUMMUS AND  
PEANUT BUTTER  
BOTH COME  
FROM LEGUMES!**



# COMPETITION LUNCH BOX

*What's in Your Lunch Purse on Meet Day???*



A question I get frequently is what can I snack on or bring to my competitions to avoid mid competition "BONK" or loss of energy. What you need are sources of simple sugar and a little healthy fat to stave off hunger pains but also that bit of sugar to push you through your competition.

Here are my tips for packing a bag that will keep you hydrated, energized and happy:

Dried pineapple or mango chunks

Dried Peas or chickpeas with cranberries and pecan mixed in a baggie  
Packets of almond butter, peanut butter or other seed or nut butter

Bottle of water or coconut water for electrolyte or sodium boost if you become dehydrated

Rice cakes mini or regular with protein topping like guacamole or nut butter

Carrots, celery or cucumbers for hydration

Dates, Raisins, Grapes or Dried apple chips

Orange slices (if you can tolerate citrus on a not so full stomach) and a banana

Dry oatmeal or home made granola or bars (Check out Gymnachef's M'Energy Bars-perfect for mid competition snacking)

AND Don't forget the dark chocolate!

# IS YOUR GYMNAST EATING ENOUGH PROTEIN?

IS your gymnast getting enough protein? Muscle repair. Strong bones, joints and muscles. Injury prevention. All of these things will be directly affected by the amount of protein your athlete is ingesting. Often times our gymnasts are eating plenty of carbohydrates, sugars and fats, but they are missing out on their protein intake.

The American College of Sports Medicine recommends 1.2 to 2.0 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day for athletes spaced throughout the day. So what does that look like?

Let's say you have a 100 pound athlete. This is 45kg.

Multiply that by a minimum of 1.2 grams and a maximum of 2.0 grams of protein.

This is quite a big range - between 54 and 90 grams of protein

You will need to do the conversion for your particular athlete, but for examples sake, what does that look like in terms of daily intake?

Here is an example meal plan that would provide your 100 pound athlete EASILY with 90 Grams of Protein

## Breakfast:

Oatmeal 1/2 cup= 6 grams  
1 Egg= 6 grams  
1/4 cup blueberries= 0

## Lunch:

Tuna: 3 ounces= 24g  
Broccoli 1/2 cup= 2.6 grams  
Quinoa:= 1/2 cup 4 grams

## Snack:

1/2 cup Greek yogurt= 12 g  
1/4 Cup Almonds:= 6 grams  
1/4 cup strawberries= trace.....

## Dinner:

3 ounces of chicken =23 g  
4 ounce baked potato= 2.8 g  
1/2 cup peas= 4 grams

So,,,, is your athlete getting enough protein?

# HERE ARE SOME GREAT SOURCES OF PROTEIN FOR YOUR GYMNAST!

Fish, Tuna, Salmon, Sardines  
Eggs, fried, boiled or poached  
Chicken and Beef  
Grains like Oats, Quinoa, Potatoes  
Nuts, Seeds, Hummus, Nut Butters  
Lentils/Peas/Legumes and Beans  
Green Vegetables like Spinach, Kale, Broccoli  
Soy, Brussels sprouts, Cauliflower  
Yogurt, Cheese, Organic Milk



# A MESSAGE FROM THE COACH! AND A YOUNGER VERSION OF HER! PRACTICE THE FIFTH EVENT!

*by Betsy McNally Laouar*

I know it's hard sometimes. To prepare foods, pack ahead of time, and take nutrition seriously. But you have to remember, you are putting your body through something VERY DIFFERENT than most kids your age. You are pounding on hard surfaces, running, punching, lifting your body weight, breaking down your skin and bones and muscles. Protein is SO VERY IMPORTANT to rebuilding your body so that your career in gymnastics can last a very long time. Take it from me, young Betsy. I didnt eat right and I struggled with injuries my whole career! Take care of your body now, and you will thank yourself as an adult! Practice the Fifth Event!

