

Kristin Wood, R.D. Talks to Dancers about Good Nutrition

“Dancing takes a lot of energy and so does growing,” says Kristin Wood, a registered dietician and former dancer. She spoke with WSPA dancers ages 11 to 16 about good, nutritious eating habits that fuel the body and enhance sports performance. Having a balanced meal plan is key to making sure dancers get the proper nutrition which ensures energy, strength, power, endurance, safety, and overall well-being.

Water was her first topic. Dancers know the importance of drinking water before and during training or classes. Staying hydrated keeps muscles and the brain at peak performance, but then after an hour of working out, rehydration is needed so as not to deplete the muscles or focus. She suggested that some milk or cold-pressed, no sugar added coconut water can refuel the muscles more efficiently post-training because of the added carbs and electrolytes. A good way to monitor if a dancer is getting enough water, besides thirst and headache ~ both signs of dehydration~, is to look at the color of the urine to make sure it is a very pale yellow or almost clear. She recommends a daily intake of 2.3 liters of water for our young athletes.

Vitamins and Minerals were Kristin's next topic. She emphasized the importance of calcium, Iron, Vitamin D and Vitamin B12 for teen athletes. Calcium is so important for growing bones and properly functioning nerves and muscles; she told the kids to get calcium from milk, cheeses, tofu, seeds, nuts and dark leafy veggies. Getting enough iron is a big concern for dancers to keep up their energy and for girls to maintain a regular menses. Iron is found in animal products such as red meat, fish, and poultry. She reminded the vegan eaters that tofu does not have iron, but that dried beans and dark leafy vegetables do. Iron absorption increases with the intake of foods containing vitamin C. Kristin talked about vitamin D which foggy, Daly City dancers inside studios don't get a lot of. Your best sources of D are fish 2 to 3 times a week and dairy products, like 3 glasses of milk daily, but she recommends a daily vitamin D supplement, especially if you drink almond or soy milk ~ both of which do not have vitamin D.

This sums up the first half hour of Kristin's nutrition workshop. Look for next month's continuation of her important comments on fiber, whole grains, protein, EFA's ~ essential fatty acids ~ and meal plans. Her strong opinions on skipping and skimpy meals, Starbucks, Jamba Juice, and the 10 worst breakfast cereals will also be included in March's newsletter. We hope our WSPA dancers learned helpful information and great tips about good nutrition. Feel free to contact her for an individual consult:

Kristin Wood, RD kwoodlove@gmail.com