

» DAY ON A PLATE «

Sports dietitian Lauren Antonucci digs into a reader's food diary and offers advice for eating, performing and feeling your best.



JENN SOMMERMANN

AGE: 48

HOMETOWN: Freeport, N.Y.

YEARS IN TRI: 8

OCCUPATION: Office manager

BEST TRI ACCOMPLISHMENT:

2:38 at the Nautica NYC Triathlon

COVETED TRI GOAL: As an

ovarian cancer survivor, I've

committed to race 50 tris in all 50 states by age 50 to raise \$100,000 for research. I've raced 31 states and plan to add 11 more this season.

NUTRITION CONCERNS: I went gluten-free three months ago, as I was having headaches and digestive issues. I feel better, but I'm struggling with fatigue and consuming enough calories.

MY DAY

4:30 A.M. Run 6 miles

6:30 A.M. Breakfast of a banana, nuts, seeds, cold cereal (gluten-free, rice- or corn-based), low-fat milk, coffee

11 A.M. Rice snacks

1 P.M. Lunch of a PB&J on gluten-free bread, apple

2 P.M. 30-minute gym workout

4 P.M. Piece of chocolate

7 P.M. Dinner of a lean protein (chicken or fish), vegetable and starch (potato or rice)

8 P.M. Macaroon, cup of herbal tea. I drink at least 32 oz of water (or more) throughout the day.

LAUREN'S TAKE:

Congratulations on your triathlon and fundraising success thus far! To answer your question of whether you are getting enough food, based on your general training and racing goals, it does not appear that you are meeting your dietary needs. You can be weight-stable and still be eating *less* than your body needs. What we usually see in that case is extreme fatigue and/or increased risk of injuries and illness. You don't have time for either of those, so boost your nutritional intake now before you get too far into the season.

You absolutely need more total protein in your daily diet. I recommend adding a serving of Greek (higher protein) yogurt daily. It's an easy way to get an extra 13–16 grams of protein, and the yogurt's probiotics may help your GI issues. You should also add a serving of higher protein carbohydrate, such as cooked beans, lentils or higher protein grain. Carry a snack pack with you daily so you do not go hungry for lack of available gluten-free foods, or make an unhealthy choice out of necessity! Your snack bag should contain

one or two servings of pre-cut raw vegetables to boost your total fiber and antioxidant intake and help protect your muscles from all of the damage your heavy racing season will ask them to endure. To that end, you should also add another daily serving of anti-inflammatory "good" fats daily: either walnuts, a quarter-avocado, olives or pumpkin seeds. Top off your snack bag with a serving of additional fruit, plus a water bottle if you are not already doing so.

Finally, consider whether gluten-free is truly what your body needs. It might be, and either way it was certainly worth a trial to see if your symptoms improved, but if your energy still does not increase after following my dietary recommendations, I would recommend considering other nutritional reasons for your "digestive issues" and visiting your doctor to rule out any other medical issues. Best of luck for what is shaping up to be a productive tri season! 🍌

Clinical nutritionist and certified sports dietitian Lauren Antonucci is the owner/director of Nutrition Energy in New York City.