

SAFE
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SPORT

Safeguarding Policy NUTRITION



V1/FEB 2025

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NUTRITION

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Introduction

- Everyone in gymnastics has a responsibility to create safe and uplifting experiences for all. British Gymnastics acknowledges we all have a duty of care to safeguard the physical, emotional, and psychological health of gymnasts.
- The mandatory requirements for nutrition detailed in this document, are underpinned by the British Gymnastics Safeguarding Policy or Home Nation equivalent, which contains information about who this policy applies to, the scope and purpose. After reading this document, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Welfare and Safe Sport team at British Gymnastics or Home Nation equivalent.
- As with all sports, nutrition is important as it helps gymnasts stay healthy and perform gymnastics. The need for this document and good practice guidance is to prevent inappropriate practices and promote good practices related to nutrition. Inappropriate nutrition practices can result in health issues such as eating disorders/ disordered eating, relative energy deficiency in sport (RED-S) and body dysmorphia.
- For clarity and conciseness, the term 'coaches' used in this document represents British Gymnastics members who are Coaches, Helpers, Gymnastics Activity

Instructors (GAI), and Volunteers. The term 'clubs' used in this document represents registered clubs which includes all gymnastics activity providers and environments. The term 'welfare officers' used in this document represents British Gymnastics members who are welfare officers, safeguarding officers or equivalent. The points in this document apply to all clubs or providers associated with British Gymnastics or Home Nations, and at all events affiliated with British Gymnastics or Home Nations.

- This document was developed for the gymnastics community following consultation with advisory panels, UK Sports Institute practitioners, Home Nations and other external organisations to ensure gymnast welfare is at the centre of any decision-making around nutrition.
- This document also contains information about additional support and preventing poor practices, with further information about the complaints process detailed in the British Gymnastics Complaints and Disciplinary Policy and Procedures or Home Nation equivalent. Alongside the policy and recommendations, clubs and coaches should implement good practices related to nutrition (**Nutrition Guidance for Good Practice document**).

Key responsibilities

- Clubs, coaches, welfare officers and support practitioners must ensure they follow the points contained in this document within gymnastics sessions or activity, to ensure they implement safe practices related to nutrition.
- To ensure safe practices related to nutrition are implemented, supporting information for parents/carers and gymnasts can be found in the 'What do I need to know' resources.

Associated policies & guidance

British Gymnastics

[British Gymnastics Safeguarding Policy and Procedures](#)

[British Gymnastics Standards of Conduct for Coaches, Officials & Instructors](#)

[British Gymnastics Standards of Conduct for Registered Clubs](#)

[British Gymnastics Complaints & Disciplinary Policy & Procedure](#)

[British Gymnastics Safeguarding Policy: Hydration](#)

Scottish Gymnastics

[Scottish Gymnastics Child Wellbeing & Protection Policy & Guidance](#)

[Scottish Gymnastics Code of Practice for Coaches & Officials](#)

[Scottish Gymnastics Complaints: Process and Guidance for clubs affiliated to Scottish Gymnastics](#)

Welsh Gymnastics

[Welsh Gymnastics Safeguarding & Wellbeing Policy & Procedures](#)

[Welsh Gymnastics Code of Conduct for Coaches, Volunteers, Officials and Staff](#)

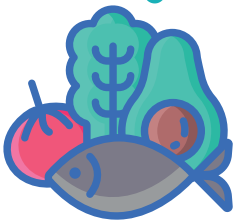
[Welsh Gymnastics Membership Rules](#)

Key definitions

- **Bespoke, individualised nutritional advice**
Nutrition advice tailored specifically to the needs and goals of an individual.
- **Coerce**
When someone tries to make you agree to something you don't or may not want to do.
- **Gaslighting**
Manipulating someone into questioning their own perception of reality.
- **Generic nutritional information**
Nutritional information that is broad and readily available, and that can be applicable to any individual.



THE IMPORTANCE OF NUTRITION AND GYMNASTICS!



A varied diet is required to provide gymnasts with a broad range of nutrients, which is important for both health and performing gymnastics.



It is important that gymnasts maintain a positive relationship with food inside and outside of gymnastics.



It provides gymnasts with energy to train as well as maintaining energy for health, growth, and maturation.

Safeguarding Policy: Nutrition

- 1.** For any gymnastics activity, clubs and coaches must ensure opportunities are provided to consume snacks as and when required by the gymnast. Please see the [Nutrition Guidance for Good Practice document](#), which clubs can use to provide generic information to gymnasts and/or parents/carers about some recommended snacks.
- 2.** Whilst remaining aligned to individual club and venue health, safety and equipment requirements, clubs and venues must ensure that if a gymnast brings a snack to consume, these are accessible to gymnasts alongside fluids (see [British Gymnastics Safeguarding Policy: Hydration](#) for more details).
- 3.** The gymnast or parent/carer must inform the club or coach if a gymnast has any dietary needs or requirements (e.g., medical – including allergies and intolerances, or for religious reasons). These dietary needs or requirements must be adhered to by clubs and coaches, and, where necessary, other members.
- 4.** Clubs and coaches can provide generic information (e.g., guidance on healthy eating, foods recommended for fuelling or dispelling myths) to gymnasts and/or parents/carers around nutrition. However, any information given must be provided directly or indirectly* from qualified practitioners (GP, dietitian and nutritionist) in a constructive manner. Clubs and coaches must consider the following when discussing nutrition:
 - a.** Whether it is the most appropriate time and place to provide information on nutrition.
 - b.** Is it more appropriate to provide education to parents/carers alongside the gymnast.
 - c.** Could there be other reasons why the gymnast has chosen to consume certain foods or drinks (e.g., socioeconomic status and access to food, disordered eating, medical reasons, cultural reasons).
- 5.** Any bespoke individual nutritional advice must only be provided directly by a qualified practitioner (GPs, dieticians, nutritionists).
- 6.** Clubs and coaches must not restrict or ban any food/drinks or food groups from a gymnast's diet. Additionally, clubs and coaches must avoid promoting the practice of meal skipping.
- 7.** Clubs and coaches must never openly judge, punish, discriminate against, control, coerce, threaten or gaslight a gymnast with regards to nutrition. This includes the choice or amount of food/drink they have chosen to consume both inside and outside of a gymnastics environment.
- 8.** Where there is a health, performance, or injury concern regarding nutrition and or body composition, clubs and coaches should liaise with the gymnast and parent/carer (in the case of a person under 16 or person at risk).

Any conversation must be carried out sensitively, with consideration of the gymnast's mental and emotional capacity. This may include speaking to a parent/carer in the first instance before including the person under 16 or person at risk.

Gymnasts and parents/carers (in the case of a person under 16 or person at risk) should seek advice from appropriately qualified practitioners (GPs, dietitians and nutritionists) **. If any safeguarding, child or adult protection or welfare concerns are identified, the necessary reporting must take place to prevent harm, protect all and promote health.

Footnotes on p8

Footnotes from p7

*Indirectly refers to clubs and coaches providing information for gymnasts and parents/carers which is sourced from qualified practitioners (GP, dietitian, nutritionist) and should be generic in nature. For example, this could be messaging or infographics (see the **Nutrition Guidance for Good Practice document** which contains examples and resources provided by qualified practitioners working with British Gymnastics, which clubs and coaches are encouraged to use).

**Coaches in dual-role positions: some coaches may hold relevant degrees/ qualifications and or professional accreditation (i.e., nutritionist, dietician) that would enable them to fulfil a range of support roles within the sport. If the individual with a dual-role coaches within the club setting in any capacity, they are not permitted to provide bespoke individualised nutrition advice to gymnasts or their parents/carers in the same club as per the policy due to their coaching role. This is to create boundaries with areas that have been identified as sensitive.

Support & preventing poor practice

Everyone should feel able to ask a question, ask for help, or raise a concern; no matter who you are, or how you are involved in gymnastics. Use the information below to help say something if you see or experience something that doesn't feel right.



Query

If you are not sure or feel uncomfortable on a practice or comment you implemented, experienced, or observed, it is ok to raise a query with someone you feel comfortable with. This could be with a coach, gymnast, friend, welfare officer, parent/carer, or club manager.

Reflect

Take the time to reflect on what has happened and whether anything could have been done differently. Would it be acceptable outside of gymnastics?

Seek

It is ok if you are not sure or do not know the answer, there are lots of people that can help including other coaches, welfare officers and British Gymnastics Welfare Officer Team (welfareofficer@british-gymnastics.org), Scottish Gymnastics Wellbeing and Safe Sport team (safegym@scottishgymnastics.org), Welsh Gymnastics Safeguarding (safeguarding@welshgymnastics.org) or the Northern Ireland Welfare Officer (welfareofficergni@gmail.com). You can contact British Gymnastics, Scottish Gymnastics or Welsh Gymnastics for advice at any point, this will not be taken as an official complaint.

NOTE: All Home Nation governing bodies have a duty of care, therefore if they have any concerns this will be escalated appropriately.

Making mistakes

It is ok to make a mistake. If this happens, take accountability for it, apologise, and learn from it to stop it happening again.

Raise

If you believe you need to raise a concern, contact your club welfare officer. They will then be able to deal with your concern accordingly.

Recommendations

Create a psychologically safe environment for everyone in gymnastics by promoting open, honest, and transparent conversations, with regular opportunities for feedback. Encourage and promote an environment for asking questions and respectful challenge. Regularly reflect on the day, session, or an event (see the [British Gymnastics Positive Coaching module](#) for more information on reflective practice). Encourage everyone to reflect daily.



Useful links

[Click here](#) to access the following additional resources:

- [Nutrition Guidance for Good Practices](#)
- [Poster - Nutrition Key policy points](#)
- [Poster - What do I need to know if I'm a gymnast?](#)
- [Poster - What do I need to know if I'm a parent/carer?](#)
- [Explainer video](#)

[Scottish Gymnastics Members Area](#) (Scottish Gymnastics members only)

Contact information

British Gymnastics

Safe & Fair Sport

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E. welfareandsafesport@british-gymnastics.org / welfareofficer@british-gymnastics.org

Welsh Gymnastics

Welsh Gymnastics Safeguarding and Wellbeing

T. [029 2033 4978](tel:02920334978)

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Scottish Gymnastics

Scottish Gymnastics Wellbeing and Safe Sport

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Northern Ireland

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Regional Welfare Officer details

british-gymnastics.org/safesport/safeguarding#14