

“You are what you eat” – Fueling up for Competition

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Knowing what to eat and when to eat for endurance sports like running, cycling, soccer and ultimate frisbee can seem like a science. Don't let all the information out there leave you frazzled and hungry. For the average recreational sports enthusiast a little preparation makes it very simple!



The phrase “you are what you eat” is true. Nutrition can play a key role in the final minutes of a game or race. Over time the body becomes fatigued during exercise. In order for muscles to contract properly water, carbohydrates and sodium are needed. Maintaining a healthy diet, eating high-carbohydrate meals leading up to competition and maintaining proper fuel throughout is essential.

What does this all mean? Studies recommend that a light, high-carbohydrate meal be consumed 3-hours before the event. This can include cereal with fruit, pasta, sandwiches or fruit salad with yogurt. One hour before the event consume a high-carbohydrate snack

like fruit, yogurt, cereal bars or a sports drink. During the event keep hydrated and consume carbohydrates such as water combined with energy gels, a sports drink. If you are concerned with stomach cramps or gastrointestinal upset (like diarrhea) go for a liquid meal like a fruit smoothie or orange juice.

Finally, don't forget recovery. It is at this time the body needs fuel to restore what it has lost in order to repair muscles and prevent injury and muscle soreness. A snack that contains carbohydrates and protein is suggested. This could be as easy as a peanut-butter/jam sandwich or 500ml of chocolate milk.

QUICK GUIDE

3- Hours Before

Cereal with fruit	Waffles with fruit and syrup
Pasta with tomato sauce	Fruit salad with yogurt
Fruit Smoothie	

1-Hour Before

Yogurt	Banana
Oatmeal	Cereal bar
Sports drink	

During

Water	Sports drink
Energy gels	Cut up energy bar

Recovery

Peanutbutter/jam sandwich	Chocolate milk
Orange juice	Cereal with milk
Energy bar	

Remember to keep hydrated with water and/or sports drinks!



For more information on coaching and injury prevention visit the SIRC Sport Library at www.sirc.ca

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Resources:

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Meeroff, J.C., *Healthy eating, better results*. Soccer Journal. Nov/Dec 2006, pp. 47-50.
Williams, C. and L. Serratos. *Nutrition on match day*. Journal of Sports Sciences. 24(7) July 2006, pp. 687-697.