

# Nutrition for the Athlete

As an athlete, nutrition plays an important role in your health and it has a huge impact on your performance. Follow the guideline set below to help achieve *peak performance!*

## Pre-Event Eating

### Objective/Purpose

- ◆ The pre-event meal should be quickly and easily digested, provide adequate hydration and be familiar to the athlete
- ◆ This meal helps the athlete avoid hunger and low blood sugar

### Night Before Competition Meal

- ◆ Consist of %65 carbohydrate, moderate protein, limited fat and plenty of fluids

### Pre-event Meal

- ◆ Should be consumed 2-4 hours prior to competition
- ◆ Contain approx. 250-800 calories (65% carbohydrate)



### Guidelines for the Pre-event Meal

#### ◆ **High in Carbohydrates**

Foods such as bread, cereals, grains, rice, canned or fresh fruit are good sources of carbohydrates.

#### ◆ **Fluids**

Liquids such as water, diluted juices or drinks, low fat milk, and sport drinks are recommended to promote adequate hydration.

#### ◆ **Moderate Protein**

Protein takes longer to empty the stomach than carbohydrates. Avoid high fat meats such as regular hamburger, hotdogs, deli meats etc. Good choices include lean meats, tuna or poultry, and low fat dairy products.

#### ◆ **Low in Simple Sugars**

Foods that are high in simple sugars may cause diarrhea or cramping. Examples of simple sugars are; honey, regular soft drinks, syrups, candy bars, and table sugar.

#### ◆ **Low in Fibre and Fat**

High fibre foods may give the athlete the feeling of "heavy or full". Examples of high fibre foods are; bran muffins, cereals, beans, lentils, etc. Raw veggies or fruits with tough skins may also not be advisable. Fat takes longer to leave the stomach than both carbohydrate and protein therefore limit the amount of butter, mayonnaise, salad dressing, peanut butter, fried or commercial foods.

#### ◆ **Low in Alcohol, Salt, and Caffeine**

Salt, sodium, and alcohol can lead to dehydration. Caffeine causes frequent urination and can cause spasms in the intestine resulting in discomfort and impairing coordination.

# Competition Eating

## Objective/Purpose

- ◆ The competition snack is a mini version of the pre-event meal
- ◆ It should be a small, quickly digested, familiar meal containing plenty of fluids
- ◆ This is really only needed in endurance events or day-long tournaments

## Mid-Competition Snack

- ◆ Adequate fluid content, high in carbohydrates
- ◆ Foods that leave the stomach quickly
- ◆ Pre-planned portable snacks/sports bars/granola bars



# Post-Event Eating

## Objective/Purpose

- ◆ After rigorous training and competitions, the body must be refueled to combat fatigue and to not jeopardize further performance
- ◆ Recovery nutrition is particularly important during consecutive days of training and/or competition.



## Post-Event Snack

- ◆ The post-event meal should replace fluid and electrolyte losses, replenish glycogen stores and prevent low blood sugar.

## Guidelines for the Post-Event Meal

### ◆ **Carbohydrate Feeding after Exercise**

Both liquid and solid carbohydrate feeds are equally effective in promoting glycogen repletion following exercise. Liquid may be the initial preferred form because it is rapidly digested and absorbed (also encourages re-hydration).

### ◆ **Re-hydrate with Plenty of Fluids**

Fluids such as diluted fruit juices, sport drinks and water are appropriate for re-hydration after activity.

### ◆ **Timing**

The post-exercise recovery period may be delayed if a high carbohydrate meal is not consumed within 2 hours of exercise. Muscles are most receptive to energy replacement when consumed within 15 minutes of exercise completion. Therefore, drinking something like 250mL of orange juice 15 minutes after exercise would be beneficial and then eat a meal within 2 hours.

Adapted from the *Sport Nutrition Resource Manual (2nd Edition)*  
For more extensive Sport Nutrition Information, contact the SMCA.