

Nutrition Tips

Eating Habits

Poor eating habits can result in:

- unjustified fatigue, frustration, anger, irritability;
- uncharacteristic performance; a slump or failure to maintain or achieve expected standards of play;
- inability to concentrate, learn or understand; and
- a decrease in enthusiasm, morale, endurance and efficiency.

What to Pack

It is common that box lacrosse players play more than one game per day on a competition day (i.e. a tournament), so it's very important for players to keep up and replenish their energy levels over a period of 8 hours or longer. Recommended foods may not be available at the competition site, so athletes should pack nutrition as part of their equipment. Make use of the nearby grocery store to stock up, if necessary, on nutritious snacks without spending too much money.

- Portion packs of juice
- Fruit (fresh or dried)
- Fruit yogurt
- Cheese and crackers
- Muffins and quickbreads
- Bagels
- Pudding
- Fig newtons, arrowroot biscuits
- Small boxes of cereal
- Water

NUTRITION TIPS

"A proper diet can't make an average athlete elite, but a poor diet can make an elite athlete average".

Costill. 1983

COACHING TIP:

Encourage players to stick to their packed lunch in between games. Save the trip to McDonald's until the end of the day. But remember, even when the games are over, players can still make healthy choices when eating "fast" food.

Water

It is a general rule of thumb to drink 8 to 10 8 oz glasses of water a day. Obviously this amount increases for active individuals. The body's need for water increases during periods of heightened activity. But it is important to remember that proper hydration should be maintained before, during and after any period of physical exertion. Experts say that water is the best option.

Here are some tips to help you get the most out of your workout:

- Two hours prior to exercising, drink at least two 8 oz glasses of water,
- One hour later, drink at least one 8 oz glass,
- Bring water along with you; when training, drink at least 8 oz of water every 15-20 minutes,
- After an activity, drink at least two more 8 oz glasses of water.
- If you're thirsty, you're dehydrated! If you're not thirsty and you've been working hard, then you're really dehydrated!

Replacement of water is critical. If water loss is 2% of body weight, performance may suffer, and larger losses can have serious, life-threatening effects. Always have water at practices and have even more on hand when it is hot. Encourage participants to drink, and watch for signs of dehydration.

Signs of Dehydration

Mild to Moderate

- dry mouth
- no tears when crying
- inactivity or lethargy

Severe

- very dry mouth
- fast and weak pulse
- dry and wrinkled skin
- disorientation
- fussy behavior
- muscle cramps
- sleepiness
- deep, rapid breathing
- sunken eyes
- no urination for several hours
- cool and blotchy hands and feet

Pre-competition and between event nutrition

Choosing the right foods and eating them at the right time are the keys to pre-competition and between event nutrition. Presented below are some pointers on this topic and the next page presents some sample menus.

What is the Aim?	Why?	How?
An empty stomach and gastrointestinal tract, but enough fuel for the muscles and enough food to prevent hunger.	<p>So that blood will go to the working muscles, not the digestive organs (which can cramp if food is present).</p> <p>Because muscles rely primarily on fuel stored from meals eaten in the days before competition. Food eaten on the day of the event fuels the brain and keeps the muscles topped up when the competition is long or intermittent.</p>	<p>Timing food intake and the type of food eaten. Eat lean and eat lighter the closer the event is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fats take 5 to 9 hours to leave the gastrointestinal tract • Proteins leave the gastrointestinal tract in 3 to 4 hours. • Carbohydrates take 1 to 3 hours to leave the gastrointestinal tract. • Liquids usually leave the gastrointestinal tract faster than solids.
A settled stomach and a confident athlete.	So that to pre-competition nerves don't upset the stomach and so that the athlete benefits from the psychological influence of familiar foods and those her or she has confidence in.	Encouraging athletes to learn which foods affect them adversely, which foods are easily tolerated. Discourage athletes from trying new foods on competition day.
A well-hydrated, comfortable athlete.	<p>Because salty, sugary or high fibre foods can attract water to the gastrointestinal tract and cause bloating, heaviness and dehydration.</p> <p>Because caffeine and alcohol promote water loss (are diuretics).</p>	Encouraging athletes to avoid sugary drinks, high sugar and salty foods and snacks, high fibre foods (apples, bran, granola, etc.) and alcohol. Tea and coffee are permitted in moderation.

Sample pre-competition and between event menu

Timing/Meal	Description
1 hour before the competition/event Plain or fruit yogurt milk and a medium banana Instant breakfast/milk	High carbohydrate Low fat, little protein Low fibre, primarily liquid
2 hours before the competition/event Cereal, banana and milk Plain muffin and fruit juice Toast with jam and milk	High carbohydrate Low fat, little protein
3 hours before the competition/event Sandwich Lean meat, fish, poultry or egg Milk, fruit 2-3 ounces lean meat, not fried 1 medium potato or rice or pasta Fruit and milk Large bowl cereal Fruit, yogurt Toast, fruit	High carbohydrate Moderate fat, more protein