



Sports Enhancement
PROGRAM



Nutrition Guideline for Soccer Athletes

Proper nutrition and fluid intake is paramount for optimal sports performance on the field. An athlete only has 2 minutes of energy supplied by their blood. After this brief 2 minute period, the liver starts to break down its carbohydrate stores to supply the athlete with energy during a highly active game. The liver's stores will only last up to 1 hour, after this, the athlete's body will require what is ingested to supply the athlete's fuel requirements. If your child or team is running out of gas during the last half or quarter of the game, you may want to look at what they're eating before the game. In addition, only a 2% dehydration rate will also significantly affect an athlete's performance during a competition.

In general, a young soccer athlete's diet should consist of the following proportions: 55% carbohydrate, 25 % protein, and 20% fat. Caloric requirements are individual to the athlete, and the amount of activity s/he is engaging in each day. Highly nutritious foods should always be consumed. If an athlete does not make nutritious choices each day, then a general multi-vitamin should be consumed each day as well.

Our focus will be on what the athlete is eating and drinking before, during and after a practice or game situation in order to optimize his/her performance on the field, and how quickly he or she recovers from this type of exercise.

Pre-Game Nutrition:

- You should eat a moderate –large meal 2-4 hours before a competition.
- The meal should consist of high complex carbohydrate content, and low in simple sugars, fiber, protein & fat content.
- Your pre-game meal should consist of at least 16 ounces (2 glasses) of water, non-caffeinated, or non-carbonated fluid.
- Avoid fatty foods, high fiber foods, gas-forming foods, and extremely salty foods. In addition, foods that are unfamiliar to the athlete should not be experimented with before a competition.

During Competition:

- For events up to one hour, your main focus is to remain properly hydrated. You should drink one glass (8 ounces) of water for every 20 minutes of heavy and constant activity.
- For events longer than one hour, you will need to replenish your fluid and glucose stores (the form of energy/sugar in your blood). Most sports drinks contain water and sugar, and should be consumed during a long event. You should drink one glass (8 ounces) of water for every 20 minutes of heavy and constant activity.
- If you don't like any sports drinks, you will need to fuel your body with some form of liquid meal 20-30 minutes into your competition. This can be a homemade recipe, or a sports gel sold in stores. Energy bars work well also, but take longer to digest, and some athletes are sensitive to solid food during a competition.
- In general, cool fluid is absorbed faster than room temperature liquid.

Post-Game Meal:

- You will need to replace all fluids lost within 2 hours after the immediate conclusion of competition. You will also need to replace your carbohydrates lost within 30 minutes of the immediate conclusion of your competition.
- The most accurate method of accurate fluid replacement is weighing yourself. If you weigh yourself before a game, you can compare it to what you weigh after the game. You should drink 16 ounces of water for every pound you lost. You can also check the color of your urine after an event. It should be a pale yellow, similar to weak lemonade. Sports beverages are more effective than water to help re-hydrate.

How much weight you lose during exercise (in ounces) = The amount of fluid you should drink (in ounces) to replace sweat loss.

- You should consume a high carbohydrate and protein drink within 30 minutes of the completion of your competition. One-half of your body weight in grams post-competition is needed to replenish your carbohydrate stores. (For example, if you weigh 120 pounds, you will need to consume a minimum of 60g of carbohydrates), and one quarter of your body weight in grams should be consumed in the form of a protein drink. (Therefore, if you weigh 120 pounds, you should consume a minimum of 30 grams of protein).
- If you have less than 2 hours between games at a competition or tournament, your post-game recovery meal should be mainly fluid in nature, and consuming as many calories and carbohydrates as possible.
- To help further speed your recovery, you should eat another light-moderate meal again within 2 hours after the conclusion of your competition.



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Following is a sample menu for soccer athletes:

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack
Oatmeal with lowfat milk Banana Orange Juice	Turkey Sandwich on multi-grain bread Grapes or apple Water	Grilled Chicken breast Pasta & marinara sauce Salad with lowfat dressing Green Beans Sorbet Lowfat milk/Sports Drink	Granola Bar Orange Slices Sports Drink
Egg white omelet Whole grain toast Yogurt with fresh fruit	Pasta salad with veggies & lean ham Baked chips Orange slices Sports Drink	Rice Pilaf Salad with lowfat dressing Frozen yogurt Fruit Juice	Yogurt Graham Crackers Sports Drink
Cereal (sugar free) with lowfat milk Multi-grain french toast Orange	Tuna sandwich on whole grain bun Veggies with lowfat ranch or cottage cheese Grapes Water/sports drink	Lean Meat selection: fish, chicken, turkey, lean steak (no bigger than size of fist) Dark leafy green salad with low fat dressing Pasta & marinara sauce Sugar-free jello	Peanut butter & Crackers Raisins Sports Drink
Bagel with lowfat cheese Yogurt or cottage cheese with fresh fruit Glass of lowfat milk	Tortellini pasta Steamed Veggies Nectarine Sports drink	Lean Pork chop Baked Potato Steamed veggies Fat-free fudgesicle	Air-popped popcorn String cheese Raw veggies

General Guidelines:

- Meat portions should be no larger than size of fist. Look for other sources of protein other than saturated fats.
- Veggie portions should be no larger than a coffee mug.
- Bread choices should be dark grains, no larger than an apple.
- Dressings, sauces & gravies should be low-fat, and used sparingly.
- Water consumption should be 16 ounces per meal and per snack session.
- Avoid caffeine and highly diuretic beverages (i.e., apple and cranberry juices).
- Avoid processed foods and carbonated drinks.
- Plan ahead for all meals. Bring snacks to school and sports drinks to practice to consume after practice if dinner is unavailable within 30 minutes.
- When traveling, items may be unappealing on the menu or experimental in nature. Bring food with you (i.e., sports drinks, gels, bars) that you know works for your body and that you know you like.
- If you notice a white ring around your jersey, hat, or uniform, you tend to sweat a lot of electrolytes out of your system. You should focus your fluid intake around sports drinks, not water.

⚠️ These recommendations are general guidelines for athletes. This does not replace the advice of a doctor or registered nutritionist. These guidelines do not pertain to athletes that are in a weight loss or weight gain situation. Please consult your physician before embarking on a new exercise program or diet regimen.