



GAME DAY NUTRITION

Why is Nutrition so Important for Athletes?

Our bodies will struggle to consistently perform at the level you aspire to if you fail to take care of your body through proper nutrition.

Our players need a well-rounded diet to promote good health and growth. An active child in our competitive soccer program needs to modify their eating habits even more. They should aim to eat nutrient rich foods to match the energy demands of soccer practices and games. Young athletes need to eat the right foods, in sufficient amounts, at a specific time. Inadequate nutrition could result in less energy than their teammates and opponents that are making the right nutrition choices.

The intensity of soccer training and games will make a nutrient-deficient child more susceptible to injury and illness. Nutrition is frequently a missing-link to the advantage athletes and coaches often seek and is of huge benefit to anyone seeking to improve their athletic performance.

This provides our players with a simple to follow guidelines on how to make good nutrition choices pre - during - post soccer.

Pre Match

Your pre-match meal should be consumed 2-4 hours before kick-off and be followed up with a smaller snack depending on game time. Some players like to feel full, some like to feel light, some prefer to eat solids, some prefer food in liquid form. Test what works for you!

The focus of your pre-match meal should always be on carbohydrates, preventing hunger and limiting fat intake, with a low to moderate protein content. The closer to the game, the more carb dominant the meal should be.

Drink 1-2L of fluid between breakfast and the match. Leave no longer than 3 hours between meals. Drink fluids that are cool, flavored and can contain a pinch of sodium.

Carbohydrate Examples:

- Oatmeal with Honey
- Pancakes with Berries
- Potatoes / Sweet Potatoes
- Pasta
- Bagel's / Bread
- Fruit / Fruit Smoothie

Protein Examples:

- Whey Protein
- Fish
- Chicken
- Beans
- Turkey
- Low Fat Cottage Cheese



During

Half time is all about restoring hydration, lost electrolytes and muscle glycogen with high GI carbohydrates.

Examples:

- Pineapple
- Banana
- Dried fruit
- Energy bars
- Rice cakes
- Isotonic drinks

We can lose up to 30oz of fluid per hour, this can increase in hot conditions. Continue to hydrate with water / isotonic drink. Drink as much as you can comfortably without upsetting the stomach.

Post-Match

Your post-match nutrition has a huge impact on your ability to train well in the week to follow, it should be as nutrient packed as possible. Your body is seeking to replenish muscle glycogen and start the recovery/repair process.

Post-match is a prime window of opportunity to replenish your muscle glycogen stores. If you skip your post-match nutrition, you're setting yourself up for increased risk of injury and depleted energy levels.

Post-match meals won't look dissimilar to your pre-match meal (see above recommendations), however there is an increased need for protein to help repair and rebuild. Also, post game is a good opportunity to satisfy any cravings in a smart way with some high GI carb sources. In moments like this, traditionally 'unhealthy' snacks might be your best choice because of their convenience and rapid effect on blood sugar levels (I recommend low fat Chocolate milk!).

A soccer player (depending on weight) can lose two liters in sweat during a game in climatic temperatures in the range of 72°-80°. In hot weather, you can lose nearly 3 quarts of fluid through sweat! It is essential we rehydrate and restore our bodies to a water-balanced state. Aim to drink at least 24 oz of fluid immediately post game.

Dates for parent education webinars coming soon, topics including;

- Nutrition 101 (macronutrients)
- A Balanced diet
- A soccer players diet
- Tournament Nutrition / Hydration