



## Fueling for Events: School Aged Athletes

Dear Athletes,

Your coaches have asked me to give you some information on how best to fuel for both training and events. As athletes you need to eat certain foods to do your best and enjoy your events. You also need to eat well after training so that you are not too tired for school the next day. So, here are some ideas or suggestions that you may want to try:

**Snack before training or an event** – the time before will differ depending upon event

- *Whole grain cereal and milk*
- *Fruit, dried or fresh*
- *Water, tea, milk or fruit juice*
- *Whole grain toast with peanut butter, marmite or banana*
- *Whole grain bread as a sandwich of tuna, banana, peanut butter, chicken, humus or cheese*
- *Yogurt and two digestive biscuits*
- *Cereal bar and fruit*

Reasons and Benefits -

- *Breakfast before an event or training will improve your attention, concentration and memory as well as your performance.*
- *Carbohydrate (CHO) is the main muscle fuel. If you choose whole grain then the energy released will last for longer.*
- *Remember, your event days are long. You need endurance, strength and speed.*
- *CHO stored in muscle is not endless and will need to be replaced after a training session or event.*

After an event or Training –

- *Wholegrain sandwich of ham, chicken, cheese, peanut butter, banana, tuna or salmon*
- *With scones, pancakes, cereal bars, and fruit*
- *Drink of milk, water or fruit juice.*

## **Fluids -**

- *12+ year olds need about 2.5 liters per day of water.*
- *Try to make drinks sugar free, (remember your teeth!)*
- *Sports drinks can be high in sugar. Most of us just need water and a healthy snack including milk after training or a match.*
- *ISOTONIC sports drinks may be required after a long event day or exhausting training session.*

Reasons and Benefits -

- *Your muscles need to be cooled to body temperature to work well,*
- *Water flushes toxins from your exhausted muscles and prevents soreness the day after.*
- *Remember in hot weather you need more water.*

## **Iron -**

To encourage healthy growth and strong bones the body requires iron. Lack of iron is a condition common in teenagers who take part in a lot of sport. This condition is known as Anaemia.

To prevent this condition it is recommended that you eat -

- *Red meat*
- *Eggs*
- *Green vegetables*

Reasons and Benefits -

- *Iron carries oxygen to tired muscles; helping them work for longer.*

## **Protein -**

Most of us eat enough of this already and certainly do not need further more in the form of supplements. Protein will not improve your muscle strength or bulk and, if anything will only give your kidneys extra work to do!

Note, our protein stores will be protected, if you eat plenty of Carbohydrate (CHO) based meals and snacks before and after training to ensure you have enough energy for the whole training session or event.

Here are some dietary suggestions to consider –

Always have Bread, potato, pasta, rice, couscous or crackers with your meal, and add some protein as chicken, meat, cheese, fish, beans, eggs, lentils or nuts. In addition make sure meal or snack before training contains protein and CHO.

Reasons and Benefits -

- ***A good mixture of different proteins each day will mean that your growing body and muscle will be built with the best materials (amino acids) available.***

Fat -

The energy needs of an athlete are high but this does not mean you need a high fat diet. Some fat is essential for growth and for brain development and concentration.

Here are some dietary suggestions to consider -

Try and add oily fish such as salmon, herring, mackerel and sardines, to your diet. These fish are a great source of healthy fats along side seeds in bread and nuts.

Reasons and Benefits -

- ***Fat is a good source of energy, but most of us eat too much.***
- ***A high fat and sugar snack before an event may slow your performance and may not last long enough.***

A reminder to you teenagers out there -

- ***Teenagers need to eat more frequently than adults.***
- ***They need more calories, protein, vitamins and minerals than adults of the same weight.***
- ***Their body chemistry is not as efficient as adults', and they are growing!!***
- ***It may take more than one try at a new food before it is liked!***
- ***Weight gain on a poor diet will result in weaker muscle strength.***
- ***Sugary sweets and chocolate are also useful sources of energy. Have them in addition to the foods mentioned above.***
- ***Look after your teeth***
- ***Eat at least five portions of fruit or vegetables a day***
- ***Enjoy your food***
- ***Rest***