

Nutritional Advice for Swimmers

The right diet is making sure . . .
You choose high grade fuels for high output performances
You look to form healthier habits in what you eat.

It's not about your size or losing weight.

You are what you eat – do you eat junk?
The most important meal is breakfast
A balanced diet is . . .
Ensuring your diet is rich in carbohydrates, low in fat, salt and sugars with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables.

When you swim . . .
You burn 7-9 calories a minute . . . which is a lot!
You need high muscle endurance so good fitness is required.
There is high fluid use . . . you use and lose lots of water when you swim.
Energy for swimming comes from . . .
Complex Carbohydrates . . . which means you need to eat plenty of good foods!!!
Water in fluids . . . so as well as you swim in it, you need to drink lots of water.

Avoid false energy . . .

Swimmers should be aware that eating sweets and chocolate before training and racing should be avoided. These make you feel energetic for a while before feeling very drowsy after the sugar rush. They also have a dehydrating effect that will impair performance.

Why you need to keep hydrated . . .

Physical activity generates heat within the muscles. As a result of this the body needs to cool down and this is done by losing sweat. Therefore hydration levels fall. Training and Race Performance drop with dehydration
Swimmers do not feel they are sweating because they are in the pool.
A drinks bottle should be brought to each training session. Add a little fruit juice to a bottle of water with a pinch of salt (replace salt lost through sweat).
Avoid fizzy drinks. Dilute sports drinks like Lucozade Hydro-active or Powerade with water.

When and how to drink . . .

Before you get thirsty
Check your urine – the lighter the colour the better. If it is dark then you are becoming dehydrated. Swimmers should be trying to drink throughout the day, even in colder months. Do not take gulps or drink too quickly. Sipping frequently is more effective.

Ways to increase carbohydrate levels

High Energy Breakfasts

- Cereal with semi-skimmed milk, topped with bananas, sultanas or yoghurt.
- Toast with Jam or Honey
- Baked beans on toast
- Muffins or waffles with honey or jam
- Banana milkshake (low fat milk)
- Fruit Smoothies adding possibly honey or malt
- Fresh fruit or tinned fruit

High energy lunches

- Beans or Spaghetti on toast
- Jacket potatoes with filling such as tuna, cottage cheese
- Pita bread filled with chicken salad
- Pasta, rice or bean salad
- Low fat protein based sandwich, e.g., turkey, lean ham etc
- Fruit smoothie and vegetable salad

High energy main meals

- Pasta and sauce (preferably not cheese based)
- Stir-fry chicken and noodles
- Tuna, or other fish risotto
- Lean meat (trim the fat off) with steamed vegetables and potato
- Chill con carne (more rice, less meat)
- Vegetable or meat lasagne in a low fat sauce
- Shepherds pie (lots of mashed potatoes and veg)
- Grilled Chicken (skin removed) with salad or vegetables and rice.

High energy desserts

- Fresh fruit salad with yoghurt
- Rice pudding with low fat milk, sultanas or raisins added
- Muller Rice
- Bread pudding
- Sweet filled pancakes
- Low fat Ice cream and bananas or other fruit

Daily intake

- 5-6 Portions of Fruit & Vegetables
- 1-2 Portions of Grains or Cereals
- 1-2 Litres of water
- 2-3 servings of Dairy (small piece of cheese, yoghurt, low fat milk etc)
- 2 servings of protein (low fat meat, fish, beans, peas, lentils, unsalted nuts)

Variety

- Ensure that a variety of foods are eaten
- Eating the same food cannot provide the full benefit of nutrition

Other points to note

High energy snacks – One when training straight from school

- Fresh fruit such as apples, satsumas, pears, grapes and bananas
- Dried fruit like apricots, dates, currants, raisins
- Banana, honey or jam sandwiches
- Teacakes, muffins, Swiss roll, crumpets, malt loaf, fruit cake
- Low fat cereal bars, fig rolls, digestive biscuits, pop tarts
- Plain popcorn
- Sports Drinks

The go slow foods

- Crisps
- Confectionery such as chocolate bars, sweets, biscuits
- Plain salted peanuts
- All fried food
- Take away fast food
- Chips

Gala / Meet preparation

Ensure your carbohydrate levels are high before the first race by practicing good nutrition in training leading up to an event. Take extra fluids during the day before the meet. Practise your eating and drinking routine during training. Never try something new on the day of the competition.

Take your own food with you and do not rely on adequate food and drink being available at the venue. Avoid go slow foods at all costs. Do not eat food rich in spices such as garlic, chilli, paprika etc at least two days before competing. Get enough sleep the night before.

The above is advice only and it is always important to monitor your diet with your parents and try nothing that they do not approve of.

The only TRUE the only true expert is your own family doctor who will always be available to give you advice.