



Helping you reach your sporting goals

Nutrition in Aussie Rules

Everyday Nutrition

Athletes who compete in the heat have greater demands for many nutrients including carbohydrate, protein, fluid, sodium and other micronutrients.

Carbohydrate

Carbohydrate is the nutrient used as fuel for muscles. When our body runs out of carbohydrate performance reduces dramatically, ability to learn new skills or concentrate reduces and injuries increase. During the competition season it is important to follow a high carbohydrate diet.

- At meal times ensure that half of your plate is filled with high carbohydrate foods. (Pasta, Rice, Noodles, CousCous, Bread, Potato, lentils, legumes)
- Have high carbohydrate, low fat snacks throughout the day (muffins, sandwiches, K-time bars, muesli bars, pretzels, dry cereal, fruit)
- Don't skip meals and try not to have more than 3 hours without a snack or meal.
- Drink high carbohydrate beverages especially if you need to gain weight. (Fruit juice, sports drink, soft drink, cordial)

Protein

Protein is essential for growth and repair.

- If you want to gain weight protein is needed in greater amounts especially around exercise.
- Protein must be consumed with carbohydrate to gain weight, recover fully and to repair injuries or slight damages of training (Whey protein powders will have less effect than a supplement such as Sustagen or Powerbar protein plus)

- Protein needs (grams) is your weight (in kg) x 1.2 – 1.9g/kg/day.
- Try to have a food high in protein at every meal (meat, chicken, fish, cheese, milk, nuts, vegetarian meat alternatives, yoghurt)
- Too much protein, reduces testosterone and therefore reduces ability to gain lean muscle mass. Focus should be carbs first, fluid and recovery second and protein third.

Fluid

Being as little as 2% dehydrated can reduce performance by 20%. Alarmingly the same level of dehydration increases perception of performance by 25%.

In general, most team sport players do not replace the fluid they lose through sweat and chemical reactions within the body.

If you have lost a large amount of fluid through sweat, you cannot rehydrate with only water. Sodium is an electrolyte needed to move fluid into the cells. If you use sports drinks with sodium during and after exercise, you recover better, you produce less urine and you are thirstier so you drink more.

- Drink about 3 - 4 litres of fluid per day (average 85-90kg)
- Always drink sports drink during exercise or recreational activities.
- You can make your own sports drink
 - 500mL cordial
 - 1000mL flat lemonade
 - 250mL juice or concentrate
 - Salt (~ 1 teaspoon or as much as tolerated.)
- Make a habit of weighing yourself before and after exercise. The amount you lose is equal to that amount in litres of water. As you continue to lose fluid in recovery you need to replace this by 150%.

Recovery

It is important to have good recovery strategies for after training and competition so that you can perform at your best continually.

- Within 45 minutes of finishing exercise have a high carbohydrate snack (muesli bars, fruit and yoghurt, sandwiches, fruit juice, muffin, pancakes)

- Within 2 hours of finishing exercise have a high carbohydrate, high protein meal (eg. Spaghetti with meat sauce, meat with vegetables, potato and bread, curry/stew with rice)
- Always replace fluid and electrolytes. (Sports drinks, water with vegemite sandwiches)
- Continue to eat and drink high carbohydrate, low fat meals until your next exercise session.
- Make use of frozen dinners or packet meals if your cooking skills are low or time is limited.

Game Nutrition

Day Before

Eat meals that are low in fibre, high in carbohydrate and energy, low in fat and moderate in protein. Remember fluid!

- Use white bread, pasta, rice and other grains where possible.
- Have 'kids' cereals for breakfast.
- Make use of liquid meal supplements.
- Have high carbohydrate drinks throughout the day and lots of them.
- Snack on high carbohydrate foods (fruit, pancakes, bread, cereal bars)
- Eat a high carbohydrate dinner (spaghetti, noodles, rice, bread, potato etc)

Game Day

Eat a large meal 4-5 hours prior to game commencement. High Carbohydrate, Low fat, Moderate Protein.

- Cereal, Toast, Fruit and Fruit juice
- Eggs, Toast, fruit and juice
- Pasta Dish
- Rice or Noodle Dish

- Use meal replacements if you are not great at eating large meals.

Continue to snack on high carbohydrate snacks up to 2 hours prior to game.

- Muffins, Cereal bars, Pancakes, Sandwiches etc
- Have a large drink of carbohydrate containing fluid such as sports drink 1 ½ hours prior to game commencement.
- Sip on water or sports drink prior to game
- Ensure that you go to the bathroom just prior to game commencement even if you don't think you need to go.

During Game

- Most of your fluid should be sports drink! This will top up carbohydrate store, replace a small amount of salt lost, reduce urine production and allow you to play better for the entire game.
- Take every opportunity to replace fluid.
- At half time have something to eat or at the minimum sportsdrink or cordial to drink. (Glucose lollies, white bread, small amounts of fruit)
- Immediately after, take notice of recovery practises. This will improve energy levels for the next day, reduce inflammation and improve your preparation for the next game.

Recovery

- Have a high carbohydrate drink or snack as soon as you finish playing. This can include juice, sportsdrink, pancakes, vegemite sandwiches.
- If you have more than an hour between games, have something with protein in it about 30 – 45 minutes from finishing. This can be a Sustagen, cheese and vegemite sandwich, chicken roll, glass of milk or ham on crackers.
- Eat a meal within 90 minutes of finishing games if you are done for the day. These meals should include a protein and carbohydrate food. Such as pasta and meat, chicken and rice, steak and potato.

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