



## NUTRITIONAL NEEDS FOR SOCCER PLAYERS

A healthy diet is essential for any athlete. The better quality of food you eat the better performance you will get from the body.

There are three sources of energy in food:

1. **FATS**
2. **PROTEINS**
3. **CARBOHYDRATES**

### FATS

Found in meats, dairy products, eggs, nuts & oils contain the most energy.

- ❑ Only beneficial for low intensity exercise, such as jogging
- ❑ Too much fat is not good for your health
- ❑ Cut down on junk food such as, fatty meats and dairy products
- ❑ Bake grill/broil, and boil rather than fry

### PROTEINS

Found in fish, meats, vegetables, and dairy products

- ❑ Help muscle building and strength that is essential for players
- ❑ Protein has proven difficult for the body to be converted into energy
- ❑ Protein provide only a small percentage of the body's energy

### CARBOHYDRATES

Carbohydrates are the best source of energy for the body

- ❑ They provide most of the energy for aerobic and anaerobic activity
- ❑ There are two types of carbohydrates, SIMPLE and COMPLEX



### **SIMPLE CARBOHYDRATES**

**Simple carbohydrates are basic sugars, which can be found in fizzy drinks, cookies, candy, chocolate, fruit & similar foods**

- ❑ The body can convert simple 'carbs' to energy very quickly, they are useful for replacing energy which is lost during practice or game
- ❑ If it's not burned off they will be converted to fat in the body

### **COMPLEX CARBOHYDRATES**

**Complex carbohydrates are found in foods such as, wholemeal bread, wholemeal pasta, whole potatoes, brown rice, wholemeal cereals, and vegetables**

- ❑ They are not readily converted to fat as simple carbohydrates

## **CONCLUSION**

### **FOODS TO AVOID ANYTIME BEFORE A MATCH**

**Any foods with a lot of fat can be very difficult and slow to digest. Fast foods, burgers, hotdogs, doughnuts, crisps/potato chips, and candy bars are very high in fat and remain in the stomach for a long time.**

If you eat these foods as pre-match meals, they will likely be with you during the match. Avoid or limit eating these foods for your pre-match meal.

### **DAY'S BEFORE A MATCH**

**It is important that your body has a good supply of carbohydrates to produce the energy it needs**

- ❑ Carbo-loading - eat more than your normal amount of complex carbohydrates for at least two day's before a game
- ❑ This ensures that high levels of energy are in the body
- ❑ Taking an extra helping of rice or pasta might give you that extra burst of energy on the pitch/field



## **MATCH DAY**

**A good balanced meal at least three hours before playing is recommended**

- ❑ This allows sufficient time for digestion and proper absorption of the food in to the body

## **EXAMPLES OF SUGGESTED PRE-MATCH FOODS**

### **1 hour or less before a match or practice**

- ❑ Fruit or vegetable juices e.g. orange, or V-8
- ❑ Fresh fruit such as apples, oranges, peaches, grapes and bananas
- ❑ Energy gels e.g. Isotonic energy gel
- ❑ Sports drinks e.g. Gatorade.

### **2 to 3 hours before a match or practice**

- ❑ Fresh fruit
- ❑ Fruit or vegetable juices
- ❑ Bread, bagels
- ❑ Sports drink

### **3 to 4 hours before a match or practice**

- ❑ Fresh fruit
- ❑ Fruit or vegetable juices
- ❑ Bread, bagels
- ❑ Pasta with tomato sauce
- ❑ Baked potatoes



- ❑ Energy bar
- ❑ Cereal with low-fat milk
- ❑ Low-fat yogurt
- ❑ Toast/bread with limited peanut butter, lean meat, or low-fat cheese
- ❑ Sports drink

### **AFTER THE MATCH**

#### **Snack on high 'carbo' bars and drinks**

- ❑ This will replace the energy lost during the match
- ❑ Follow this up later with a proper meal, high in complex 'carbs'

### **DRINKS**

#### **During practice or a game the body loses a lot of fluid through sweat and breath and this has to be replaced**

- ❑ Drinking water is good for re-hydration, but since your losing 'carbos' as well as fluids, 'carbo-sports' drinks are a better option
- ❑ An even better option is isotonic drinks which are specially designed for quick absorption

### **AVOID CAFFEINATED DRINKS**

#### **Although caffeine acts as a stimulant by improving endurance, it can have some serious side effects for some people.**

Those who are very sensitive to it's' effects may experience nausea, muscle tremors, and headaches. Too much caffeine can result in dehydration, which decreases performance.



## MATCH DAY

**The amount of fluid to drink before a game varies**

- ❑ It is important not to drink to the stage where you are bloated
- ❑ Drink about 3 or 4 mouthfuls of water or 'carbo-sports' drink after the warm-up, about 5 minutes before kick off

## AT HALF TIME

**Drink around 3-quarters of a pint**

## AFTER THE MATCH

**Drink at least 100-200 grams/3-7 fluid oz of fluid**

## PRACTICE

**Stop every 20-30 minutes or so for a drink**

On behalf of the SoccerTutor.com team, we wish you every success in the game we all love!

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