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NUTRITIONAL GUIDELINES

Proper nutrition is a key part of a optimizing a player's performance. Listed below are **recommendations** to help one choose foods that will increase the comfort and energy level of youth and adult athletes.

BEFORE A PRACTICE/GAME

It is recommended to eat a light snack consisting of carbohydrates (fruit, pasta) about 1-1/2 hours prior to the practice/game. This will enable quick digestion, energy release to working muscles and will help in avoiding cramps.

Large/heavy meals before a practice/game will result in:

- not being able to run at full capacity
- tiredness/weighed down
- cramps and irritability
- possible vomiting
- and not being able to keep up

No chocolate bars, chips or ice cream. These will weigh down the athlete and not provide a boost of energy,

If practices/games are scheduled around mealtime, only have a small snack on the way to the event. It is better to play on a slightly empty stomach and have a regular meal after the event.

BEFORE A TOURNAMENT

It is recommended that a dinner\supper the day before the tournament be that of a complex carbohydrate one (for a list of CC's see below). This will provide the muscles with glycogen which is released through physical activity and helps in endurance due to a steady release/supply of energy.

The day of the tournament, it is recommended to eat a hearty breakfast consisting of oatmeals, fruits, whole wheat breads, pancakes (easy on the syrup) at least 1 1/2 - 2 hours prior to the game. The key is not to overload (3 bowls of cereals, 5 pancakes,)

DURING A GAME/TOURNAMENT

As the body needs to replenish lost fluid, it is recommended that water, fruit juices (not drinks or beverages) or a combination of both be used. Water goes directly to the working muscles and quenches thirst.

Eating between games is always tricky but not impossible. Try to stay away from chocolate, chips, meat sandwiches etc. as they require the body to work extremely hard in order to digest and makes one very thirsty. Foods that are easily digestible (fruits,



cheese/peanut butter sandwiches) will provide muscles with a steady supply of energy.
(Short time between games, cut back to fruit, half a sandwich)

Orange slices at half time and throughout the day are our recommended favourite.

AFTER A GAME

Plenty of fluids (water, fruit juices) to replenish the body and a good hearty meal of whatever the player wishes (the only exception is if the team makes it to a second day of play then you repeat the above recommendations).

CARBOHYDRATES

Simple

are sweet tasting substances

fresh fruit also contain simple sugars but are generously supplied with fibre, vitamins, minerals and are easily digestible.

Complex

yield sugars that are released into the bloodstream over a period of many hours and provide a steady supply of energy to the body until the next meal.

Complex carbohydrates are brown rice, pasta, whole grains, cereals (whole wheat, oatmeal), breads made from unrefined flour, beans, peas, fresh fruits, vegetables.

FIBER

aids in rapid absorption of carbohydrates and allows food to move quickly throughout the body.

PROTEIN

provides important materials to build and maintain muscles and many other body tissues. choose foods that are low in fat excessive protein takes longer to digest, is harder on the liver and kidneys and an important mineral, calcium, is lost even with a high intake of calcium.

FATS

There are four general groups

Saturated Fats - found in animal foods, dairy, coconut, chocolate, cocoa butter, palm oil, vegetable shortening margarine. These foods should be used in moderation.



Monounsaturated Fats - found in olives, olive oil. Use in moderation.

Polyunsaturated Fats - found in high concentrations in vegetable, fish, poultry. The best of the four fats.

Hydrogenated Fats - manufactured chemically, therefore, use in moderation or try to avoid completely.

Fats may be reduced by trimming the excess off meat and not adding extra fats to foods.

Resource book for athletes:

Eat to Win (The sports nutrition bible), Dr. Robert Haas

You can find it through soccerfriends.com on the shops page by going to amazon.com or in your local bookstore.