

SOCCER DIET – Pre/Post Game Meals

Introduction

Soccer players are continuously looking for ways to improve his or her performance, increasing the body's maximum potential and forcing it to achieve championship form. Training leading up to a tournament is done with hard work and commitment on a daily basis. With the amount of effort and time spent in training comes and equally high energy consumption and that is where nutrition (fuel) will come in.

High energy can be obtained through a diet which is rich in carbohydrates. Carbohydrates are the main fuel and energy source of the body and the soccer player needs loads of them. It is equally important to consume the proper carbohydrates as outlined below. Protein is also very important to the soccer player diet as they help with recovery and muscle growth. Fats are important and essential to a healthy diet as long as they are consumed appropriately. A general rule is to consume 60% carbohydrates, 25% protein, and 15% fat in your diet. Fluid is very important and should be consumed before, during, and after every soccer event.

Pre-Game Meal

The pre- game meal should be consumed 3-4 hours prior to a soccer game. Plenty of water/Gatorade should be available at the meal. The meal should be planned around individual likes and dislikes, thus a variety is essential. Carbohydrates with a low Glycemic Index (GI) should be consumed before the game to preserve energy stores and provide long lasting energy throughout the game. High GI foods should be consumed immediately before and during the game to provide for lost energy in during the first half of games. A list is provided below.

In-Game Nutrition

Players should be provided with easily digested foods during the game and at half time. These include crackers, grapes, oranges, watermelon, rice crispy bars, trail mix, etc... Gatorade should be available at all games. Each player should drink 10-12 ounces 30 minutes prior to the game, 8-10 ounces of water before kick-off, and 10 ounces of Gatorade at half time. Water should be available to all players at anytime prior to, during, and after games. Light colored Gatorade (Tiger, Rain, etc.) instead of darker colors should be available for players as it is easier to digest.

Post-Game Snack

Immediately following the game (within 30 min.), Gatorade/water should be available to players after games. Light snacks should be provided if there is a game the next day or later in the day. This should include high carbohydrate and protein foods. Trail mix, rice crispy bars, watermelon, other fruits, crackers, and of course Chick-fil-A sandwiches are always a hit. The post game snack should be provided immediately as this is when the player's glycogen stores are wide open and able to consume the most for the next match. One to two hours after this event lessens and the player is not able to consume as much food. The post game meal should contain a good balance of carbohydrate, protein, and fat. Calories are important and should be consumed at the rate of 2500/3000 per day. Older teams can consume more; younger teams may consume less depending on the weight of the individual.

GI Foods List

LOW GI FOODS MED/HIGH GI FOODS

Spaghetti
Graham Crackers
Pasta
Peanut butter crackers
Oatmeal
Corn chips
Cereals
Honey
Rice
Watermelon
Oranges
Pretzels
Grapes
Chips
Pear Dates
Apples
Baked potatoes
Sweetened yogurt
Rice Cakes
Fat Free milk
Cheerios
Green Beans
Waffles/pancakes
Nuts Bagels/muffins
Grapefruit
Bread
Dried Fruit
Cream of wheat
Avocado
Fruit roll ups
Peanuts
Mashed potatoes
Green peas
Cheese pizza
All Bran
Bananas
Popcorn
Ice Cream
Banana Bread
Pita Bread
Broccoli
Raisins
Cauliflower
Trail mix
Mushrooms
Juice box
Wheat tortilla
Fig Newton's
Pineapple

Nutritional Travel/ Tournament Guidelines

1. Players will be required to attend all scheduled meals.
2. Teams will be responsible for following and supervising the nutritional guidelines of the club.
3. Parents/players are responsible for the availability of food/fluids for each team.
4. All teams are required to have sufficient Gatorade, water, ice, and snacks in each of the player's rooms during the tournament.
5. All teams are required to provide sufficient Gatorade, water, ice, and snacks at each game for pre-game, in- game, and post- game nourishment.
6. Managers will be responsible for the designation of access to the aforementioned at games.
7. No sodas or carbonated drinks are allowed prior to and during the tournament. Water will be served at all meals.
8. Breakfast should be eaten daily. If your game is early a light breakfast should be consumed with plenty of fluids
9. Pre-game meals should be planned 3-4 hours prior to the beginning of each game. If not possible, nutritious snacks and plenty of fluid should be provided.
10. Post-games snacks should be available to each player at the conclusion of each game on the field or in the vans returning from the game. Post- game nutrition should include the immediate snack/Gatorade (within one hour of the game) followed by a larger meal later after the return to the hotel.
11. Players should hydrate at all times during the tournament. Urine color should appear clear (not dark yellow) upon waking in the morning, before the game, and before going to bed. This is a simple way of acknowledging proper hydration.