

Eat and Drink Better to Play your Best

At the most recent National Soccer Coaches Association of America national meeting in Baltimore, I had the opportunity to hear Cynthia Lair, author of the Feeding the Young Athlete: Sports Nutrition Made Easy for Players and Parents. Attached to this newsletter is a page summary that I compiled from this book as it relates to the what, when and why related to nutrition and eating as well as information regarding hydration. This one page handout will be a useful guide to help players and parents learn more about the topic of sports nutrition. In the introduction to the book, Cynthia and her coauthor, Scott Murdoch, emphasize how “eating wisely and well increases energy, endurance, and the ability to concentrate. Players who eat and drink properly have an edge over their competition, especially in the second half.” Their primary message is to, “Eat and drink better to play your best.” In upcoming versions of CN, I will continue to share information from this book so stay tuned.

Eat and Drink Better to Play your Best* - Compiled by Dave Gosselin, Director of Coaching, Lincoln Spirit Soccer Club

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Eat - Nutrition

When?	What?	Why?
2- 3 Hours Before Game or Training	Pre- Game Meal – 15% Protein (beans, fish, chicken, eggs, meat); 45% Carbohydrates (grains, breads, pasta, potatoes); 35% Fruits and Vegetables; 5% Nuts, cheese, butter	Muscles need glycogen which gives muscles fuel. Muscles can only store a limited amount of glycogen. Eating high carbohydrate food prior to game provides energy to muscles. Eat until full, do not stuff yourself.
1- 2 Hours Before Game or Training	Pre- Game Snack (if needed) – Easily digested. Suggestions: fresh fruit, crackers, bread, dried fruit, rice cakes, smoothie, raisin bread.	If you frequently run out of energy in the 2 nd half of a game, or you have a high metabolism – meaning you need to eat small amounts often or did not enough at your pre-game meal, then you may need a snack.
1 Hour Before Game or Training	No Food Recommended	Your body is focusing its energy on digestion. Body does not have time to transform food into energy the body can use.
During Game or Training	No Food Recommended	If player is under 8 years old, has a high metabolism, or tends to drag during second half, then a snack should be considered. Best choice is fruit with high water content – oranges, melons, grapes. These also help with rehydration.
0- 1 Hour After Game or Training	Post- Game Snack – Suggestions: 100% fruit juices, bagels, energy bars, fresh vegetables, muffins, pasta, yogurt, granola, graham crackers, raisin bread.	Bottom-line: eat healthy carbohydrate-containing snacks and beverages as soon as you can after a game. Muscles replenish glycogen more quickly when carbohydrate-containing foods or drinks are eaten within 30 minutes of a game or practice. Small amount of protein should be included, 1 part protein to 4 parts carbohydrate. Body needs real, wholesome food.

Drink - Hydration

When?	How Much?	What?
2- 3 Hours Before	2 to 3 cups	•Water is best. •Water flavored with citrus or other fruit. •Diluted lemonade, limeade, or other 100% fruit juice. •Sports Drinks (Gatorade, Propel).
1- 2 Hours Before	½ to 1 cup	How?
1 Hour Before	½ to 1 cup	Sipping water provides water time to get into system. Chugging water causes bloating and is not as effective getting into the system. Encourage sipping water throughout the game. Clear urine indicates the player is hydrated. Players should not wait until they are thirsty. They always need water.
Game or Training	½ to 1 cup	Why?
0- 1 Hour After Game or Training	2 to 3 cups	Water is required for cooling the body and helps the body flush out waste produced by the kidney and liver. Flushing out waste helps body recover faster. If body is not well-hydrated, energy will go to controlling temperature instead of into the muscles, which limits playing ability.

* Compiled from Feeding the Young Athlete: Sports Nutrition Made Easy for Players and Parents, Cynthia Lair with Scott Murdoch, Moon Smile Press, Seattle, WA. 2002