



Guidelines for a Healthy Young Soccer Player



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

CARBOHYDRATES: 1

PROTEIN:..... 2

FAT:..... 2

IDEAL FOODS AND BEVERAGES FOR PRE-GAME: 3

IDEAL FOODS AND BEVERAGES DURING THE GAME: 4

IDEAL FOODS AND BEVERAGES POST GAME:..... 4

DEHYDRATION/HYDRATION..... 5

SLEEP..... 5

INTRODUCTION

The amounts and types of food a player eats have an impact not only on their sport performance but also on their growth and general health levels. It is important youth players get enough energy from their food intake to carry out day to day tasks as well as any sports activities. This can often mean three meals a day is not enough and extra energy needs to be supplemented by eating snacks.

Soccer players (adults) can average approximately 10km running during a match, some midfielders run 12-13km. This type of running, at a variety of paces, requires energy as well as fitness. You can be a very fit player, but without enough energy stored in your body, you will not be able to perform well. Many players run out of steam during the second half and this is often seen as a lack of fitness, but it can often be caused by lack of energy, caused in fact, by lack of carbohydrates in the days leading up to a match.

It is important players have a good pre-match meal and take on board carbohydrates during a game, especially at half time. Another very important factor related to this, is the amount of fluids a player drinks. The body is mainly made from water and is important you keep it hydrated, especially in hot weather. Water is probably the best liquid to drink to replenish lost fluids, but some players prefer water mixed with sports drinks.

Remember also that when you feel thirsty, you are already getting dehydrated. Drink before you get thirsty, especially when playing sports in hot weather.

The three main food types are carbohydrates, fats and proteins, and it's important there is a balance of these food types in the daily food intake. For young athletes, the balance would be around 60 % carbohydrate, 25-30 % from fats and around 15 % from proteins.

CARBOHYDRATES:

Carbohydrates come in two basic forms: complex and simple. Simple carbs are one, two, or at most three units of sugar linked together in single molecules. Complex carbs are hundreds or thousands of sugar units linked together in single molecules. Simple sugars are easily identified by their taste: sweet. Complex carbs, such as potatoes, are pleasant to the taste buds, but not sweet. The body breaks down carbs into simple sugars - the major source of energy for the body.

✓ **It is suggested that 55-70% of total intake of calories be from carbohydrates**

Good Sources of Carbohydrates:

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| ➤ Whole grain bread | ➤ Pita |
| ➤ Muesli | ➤ Cereals |
| ➤ Oats | ➤ Fruit juices |
| ➤ Barley | ➤ Potatoes |
| ➤ Whole wheat pasta | ➤ Popcorn |
| ➤ Brown rice | ➤ Vegetables |
| ➤ Whole wheat muffins | ➤ Cereal bars |

PROTEIN:

Many foods contain protein, but the best sources are beef, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy products, nuts, seeds, and legumes like black beans. Protein builds up, maintains, and replaces the tissues in your body. Your muscles, your organs, and your immune system are made up mostly of protein.

- ✓ **It is suggested that 10-15% of your total intake of calories be from proteins**

Dietary Sources of Protein:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| ➤ Lean cuts of red meat | ➤ Nuts/Seeds | ➤ Kidney beans, cooked |
| ➤ Fish | ➤ Shellfish | ➤ Macaroni, cooked |
| ➤ Chicken breast | ➤ Hamburger | ➤ Soymilk |
| ➤ Turkey breast | ➤ Tuna | ➤ Whole wheat bread |
| ➤ Egg Whites | ➤ Beefsteak | ➤ White bread |
| ➤ Seafood | ➤ Cottage cheese | ➤ Rice, cooked |
| ➤ Cheese | ➤ Yogurt, lowfat | ➤ Broccoli, cooked |
| ➤ Milk | ➤ Tofu | ➤ Baked potato |
| ➤ Legumes | ➤ Lentils, cooked | ➤ Corn, cooked |
| | ➤ Split peas, cooked | |

FAT:

- ❖ **Unsaturated fats:** These are found in plant foods and fish. These may be good for heart health. The best of the unsaturated fats are found in olive oil, peanut oil, canola oil, albacore tuna, and salmon.
- ❖ **Saturated fats:** These fats are found in meat and other animal products, such as butter, cheese, and all milk except skim. Saturated fats are also in palm and coconut oils, which are often used in commercial baked goods. Eating too much saturated fat can raise blood cholesterol levels and increase the risk of heart disease.
- ❖ **Trans fats:** These fats are found in margarine, especially the sticks. Trans fats are also found in certain foods that you buy at the store or in a restaurant, such as snack foods, baked goods, and fried foods. When you see "hydrogenated" or "partially hydrogenated" oils on an ingredient list, the food contains trans fats. Like saturated fats, eating too much can raise cholesterol and increase the risk of heart disease.

- ✓ **It is suggested that 20-30% of your total intake of calories be from fats**

Sources of Fat:

- | | | |
|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| ➤ Margarine | ➤ Nuts | ➤ Shortenings |
| ➤ Vegetable oils | ➤ Milk products | ➤ Cooking Oils |
| ➤ Salad Dressing | ➤ Mayonnaise | ➤ Dressings |
| ➤ Lard | ➤ Gravies | ➤ Sauces |
| ➤ Butter | ➤ Dairy Products | |
| ➤ Eggs | ➤ Fried Food | |
| ➤ Cheese | | |

IDEAL FOODS and BEVERAGES FOR PRE-GAME:

Purpose of meal: To maximize the body's supply of stored carbohydrate fuel. This meal should top off the players stock of fluid and carbohydrates.

- ✓ **Eat approximately three hours before the game.**

NIGHT GAME:

Pre-Game meal options:

- Spaghetti
- Tomato sauce with meat
- Rice
- Lean meat
- Fish
- Chicken
- Potatoes
- Cooked dried peas, beans or lentils
- Salad (very low dressing)
- Vegetables
- Bread

Pre-Game drink options:

- Apple juice
- Orange juice
- Vegetable juice
- Fruit juice
- **WATER**

Pre-Game dessert options:

- Cheese and crackers
- Popcorn (no butter)
- Fruit
- Sherbet, 1 scoop
- Pretzels

- ✓ **AVOID: Jam, jelly white sugar, marshmallows, jelly beans, etc. and chocolate, potato chips, tacos, nachos, gravy, butter, fried foods, high fat cold cuts.**

MORNING GAME:

Pre-Game meal options:

- Bagels
- Raisin Bran
- Toast, 2-3 slices
- Yogurt
- Muffin, Bran - Oatmeal
- Pancakes (low butter / syrup)
- Bread, all varieties

Pre-Game drink options:

- Apple Juice
- Orange Juice
- Vegetable Juice
- Fruit Juice
- **WATER**
- Hot Chocolate
- Milk

Pre-Game snack options:

- Fruit bars
- Fig newtons
- Fruit - fresh or dried
- Banana
- Low fat energy bars

- ✓ **AVOID: Bacon, sausage, excess butter / margarine etc. Fried Foods: Home fries, hash browns, fried/scrambled eggs etc.**

IDEAL FOODS and BEVERAGES DURING THE GAME:

Purpose: To prevent dehydration and provide quick energy to muscles.

- ✓ **Drink every 12-15 minutes during practices and at every stoppage during the game.**

During game options:

- Water
- Gatorade
- Low fat energy bars

IDEAL FOODS and BEVERAGES POST GAME:

Purpose: To rehydrate and replenish muscle energy stores and rebuild muscle proteins.

- ✓ **Refuel with in the first two hours after competition; it is best if you get something in you immediately following the game.**

Post-game food options:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|
| ➤ Honey | ➤ Whole grain bread |
| ➤ Bagel | ➤ Corn |
| ➤ White bread | ➤ Oatmeal |
| ➤ Jams | ➤ Oranges |
| ➤ Jellies | ➤ Grapes |
| ➤ Potato | ➤ Fruit Salad |
| ➤ Cereals | ➤ Pasta with fat free sauce |
| ➤ Raisins | ➤ Sandwich |
| ➤ Banana | ➤ Low fat energy bar |
| ➤ Pretzels | |

Post-game drink options:

- **WATER**
- Gatorade

- ✓ **Avoid fast food and soda**

Dehydration/Hydration

Dehydration means that your body doesn't have enough water in it to keep it working right. A person gets water by drinking and eating. You lose water when you sweat, urinate, have diarrhea, or throw up. You even lose a little water when you breathe. Most young soccer players do not drink enough fluids during practice or games. It is extremely important to hydrate while you are exercising to replenish all fluids lost during

Signs of Dehydration

In addition to being thirsty, here are some signs that a person might be dehydrated:

- Feeling lightheaded or dizzy
- Rapid heartbeat
- Dry lips and mouth
- Another sign of dehydration is not peeing as much. Normally, urine should be a pale yellow color. Dark or strong-smelling pee can be a sign of dehydration.

Hydration Tips:

- You need to drink enough to satisfy your thirst, and extra if you're going to be exercising. The best drink is water, of course, but milk is another great drink. Juice is OK, but choose it less often than water and milk. Sports drinks are also ok once in a while, but water works just as well.
- Limit soda and other sugary drinks, such as fruit punches, lemonades, and iced teas. These drinks contain a lot of sugar that your body doesn't need. Some of them also contain caffeine, which cause you to urinate more often than normal. Leading to potential dehydration.

Sample Hydration Schedule for a young soccer player:

- Night before game/practice: 16 oz water before bed
- Morning of game/practice: 16 oz of water as soon as you get up and 17 oz more if the game is later in the day
- Pre-game/practice: 6-8 oz of water or sports drink, 15 minutes before start. Do not drink soda or fruit juices.
- After the game/practice: 24 oz of fluid within two hours of the end of the session. The best drinks would be water, sports drinks or fruit punch. Do Not Drink Soda.

Sleep

Not only is sleep necessary for your body, it's important for your brain, too. Most kids between 5 and 12 get about 9.5 hours a night, but experts agree that most need 10 or 11 hours each night. Adults are recommended to get at least 8 hours of sleep to function at their best throughout the day. Sleep is an individual thing and some kids need more than others.

When your body doesn't have enough hours to rest, you may feel tired or cranky, or you may be unable to think clearly. You might have a hard time following directions, or focusing on your offensive or defensive assignment in the game. You may feel clumsy and tired playing soccer. It is important to get plenty of sleep starting 48 hours before the competition for optimal performance. It is also just as important to get a good night sleep after your competition for proper recovery.

Sleeping Tips:

- Try to go to bed at the same time every night; this helps your body get into a routine.
- Limit foods and drinks that contain caffeine. These include sodas, chocolate, and coffee-flavored ice cream.