



## A Mini Guide to Healthy Sports Eating

**Do you want to improve your sporting performance?**

What you eat can make all the difference

Making sure that your body is 'fed and watered' is vital if you are to train or play to maximum effect.

Ensure that you have some energy and that you have digested your food properly to be wide awake, fully alert and don't feel as though you have just got out of bed. **HAVE PLENTY OF ENERGY** for the matches and energy comes from food.



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# What and When to eat



fresh fruit juice, cereal or porridge with semi-skimmed milk (add banana or dried fruit), toast or bread with jam, honey or marmalade, muffins, pancakes, hot cross buns, crumpets, bagels, baked beans on toast, yogurt or fromage frais.

**A good lunch / breakfast between  
2 and 3 hours  
before playing**



The best plan is to have a meal containing plenty of high carbohydrate food (pasta or rice), vegetables and protein like meat or fish and a drink.

To play on a full stomach is likely to make you feel sick but to play without any good breakfast is also likely to make you feel sick.

# What to drink



Drink before training / match ...  
to start well hydrated

Drink during play... to stay well hydrated

Drink after training or a match...  
to remain well hydrated

You must replace the fluid lost during exercise if you do not want your performance to suffer and to prevent dehydration. Having a **small** amount of salt in your drink allows the body to move the fluid from your stomach and into the bloodstream more quickly. Water is an adequate fluid but sports drinks contain a small amount of carbohydrate in the form of sugar. This will help you to top up your energy levels throughout your games.

Make sure the content of sugar or carbohydrate is not too high by choosing the one labelled as “isotonic” (it normally contain between 6-8g of carbohydrate per 100ml). You can drink this before, during or after your game.

You could try these home-made alternatives:

- 1) Dilute squash in the ratio one part squash, to four or five parts water and add  $1/5^{\text{th}}$  of a teaspoon of salt to every litre of drink.
- 2) Dilute fruit juice 1:1 with water and add  $1/5^{\text{th}}$  teaspoon salt to every litre of drink
- 3) Home-made sports drink i.e. 40-80g of glucose polymer to 1000ml water,  $1/5^{\text{th}}$  teaspoon salt and a sugar free flavoring. If you use sugar free squash as the flavouring, dilute the squash with water to taste and use in place of the 1000ml water.

Any chemist or supermarket sell Glucose powder.

## When and How much to drink

- ❖ Start drinking early in the day before training or competition and 2 hours before play have a large drink – you have time to get to the toilet if you need to. Depending on your ability to drink you could have as much as 600-900ml.
- ❖ About 15-20 minutes before play and after going to the toilet, drink again – aim to take at least 200ml (1/3pt. or 1 cup). Some players will be able to drink a lot more than this and some might take three times this amount.
- ❖ During play drink frequently – around 150-200ml every 15 minutes is ideal.
- ❖ When you have finished playing remember to carry on drinking!
- ❖ Thirst is not a good indicator of when you need to drink. By the time you are thirsty, you are already dehydrated.

In between matches, you can 'top up' with

## high energy snacks



like in the picture or dried fruit, plain biscuits, crumpets, scones, bread sticks.

## What to avoid



plus burgers, sweets and chocolates

They do more harm than good!

**Why?** Because the body converts sugar to energy very quickly, in minutes, and the energy that it gets from **fat** is no good because it cannot be metabolized at a quick enough rate. Eating sugary things is OK if you use the energy straight away – otherwise your body has to do something else with the sugar and it stores it as fat. Even if you do use the energy straight away it doesn't last long and you feel 'low' when the energy runs out which can happen during a match.

**Fizzy** drinks will fill you with gas and could make it very uncomfortable to play.

*Based on advice from more established sports organizations*