

## **NUTRITION**

### ***What You Eat Can Help You Make the Most of Your Development!***

As an athlete, it is essential to be aware of the effect that nutrition and eating habits can have on your training and development. Nutrition affects everything from energy levels to mental capacity! Nutrition is one aspect of training that often gets ignored because it's easier to "grab a burger." Remember, you are an athlete, and athletes have different nutritional requirements than the average person. Your eating habits should be tailored to coordinate with what you are trying to achieve in your development in this off season.

For example, are you trying to gain weight over the off-season? Your trainer will definitely factor nutrition into your training regimen. Did you know that it takes 500 to 1000 extra calories each day and at least three heavy muscular workouts of at least one hour each to gain 0.5 to 1.0 kg (1 to 2 lbs) of lean body mass in a week?!

**Here are some tips on eating prior to a game:**

#### **The Pre-Event Meal should be:**

- Small
- Eaten approximately 2 to 3 hours before the event so as not to be full or hungry when competing
- Mainly carbohydrates (complex) which are more easily digested than protein or fats
- Moderate in protein and fats
- Include water
- Not too high in fibre
- Food the athlete likes and has confidence in

**Please don't confuse a small, pre-event meal with how you should be eating in general. You will need a lot of calories, and it is normal to eat a lot during the development part of your season. The pre-event meal simply refers to the 2-3 hours prior to your ice time or training time.**

**Here are some Pre-Event suggestions:**

- **Cereal with skim milk and banana**
- **Poached egg on dry toast with fruit juice**
- **Vegetable soup and crackers with skim milk**
- **Blender shake: fresh fruit, skim yogurt, orange juice, ice cubes**

**MYTH: Quick energy foods like pop, chocolate bars and honey will give you tremendous energy for performance.**

**FACT: These foods can actually harm rather than help if you eat them an hour or less before your performance. The simple sugar activates insulin and causes the sugar in the blood to be removed too fast. The resulting low blood sugar can leave you tired or weak.**

**MYTH: Drinking water while exercising can cause stomach cramps**

FACT: On the contrary, it may be dangerous not to drink water during exercise, especially in hot weather. A 1 to 3 kg weight loss due to sweating can harm your performance and may lead to dangerous dehydration. Thirst is not a good indicator of fluid needs. The thirst mechanism is actually dulled during and following exercise. Drink water before, during (every 10 to 15 minutes) and after exercise whether you are thirsty or not. Rule of thumb: For each pound of weight lost as sweat, athletes should drink 2 cups of water.

**Why is water so important? Water functions in the body as:**

- a solvent in digestion
- a major portion of the blood
- a lubricant
- a coolant (for prevention of overheating)

***Drink cool, plain water:***

- 1 cups 15 minutes before practice or game
- Water every 10-15 minutes during practice or game
- **Limit use of sport or soft drinks.** Water is the best fluid replacer. It leaves the stomach faster than concentrated liquids such as the sport drinks or fruit juices.

*Thank you to Nutrisport, "Sports Nutrition," and the B.C. Nutrition Council for the information provided.*