

Competition Day Nutrition

Good nutritional preparation before the day/s of your competition can help optimize performance and minimizes food-related stresses on the day.

A competition day can vary by:

- Number of matches
- Time of matches
- Time in between matches
- Length of matches

Nutritional plans need to be carefully considered to allow for flexibility for competition day schedules but still ensure you are optimally prepared for each match.

When breaks between matches are not long enough to digest a large meal it is better to 'graze' on small nutritious snacks throughout the competition day. The amount of food that can be tolerated varies between individuals, so an individual plan should be practiced during training/ low key competitions to work out the best nutritional strategy for you. The following can be used as a guide of the types of foods that may be included during the breaks in your competition day:

3-4+ hours between matches

Main priority = Refuel, rebuild, rehydrate

A light meal which will provide some carbohydrate and protein

Ensure you focus on hydration – water/ sports drink/ fruit juice/ squash

Crumpets with jam or honey & low fat milkshake

Hot cross buns with Jam/ Honey & pint of milk

Baked potato & cottage cheese/ baked beans filling & glass of milk

Lean meat sandwich & fruit

Baked beans/ tinned spaghetti on toast

Breakfast cereal with milk

Bread roll with cheese/meat filling + banana

Fruit salad with fruit-flavoured yoghurt

Pasta or rice with a sauce based on low-fat ingredients (e.g. tomato, vegetables, lean meat)

1-2 hours between matches

Main priority = refuel & rehydrate!

A combination of snacks that provide a good source of carbohydrate

Ensure you focus on hydration – water/ sports drink/ fruit juice/ squash

Liquid meal supplement

Sports drinks

Milk shake or fruit smoothie

Sports bars (check labels for carbohydrate and protein content)

Breakfast cereal with milk

Cereal bars

Fruit-flavoured yoghurt

Hot cross bun

Fruit

Less than 1 hour between matches

Sports drink/ Squash

Sports gels/ Sports bars

Jelly sweets

Top tips to prepare:

1. Be prepared!

Never rely on food being available at the venue! Food at sporting venues is normally aimed at the spectators and may not be the best choices to meet your nutritional goals on a competition day. The following guidelines will help ensure you have adequate supplies available:

- Find out what food is available to you at the venue:
- Take your own supplies
 - o Consider - Food freshness, perishability, refrigeration needs of food
 - Consume refrigerated products early in the day
 - Fragile food – keep cool in a container
 - o Carbohydrate foods
 - o Protein foods

Snack ideas

Carbohydrate foods

Sandwiches/ Bread with jam/ honey
 Hot cross buns
 Scotch pancakes
 Jaffa cakes
 Fruit/ malt loaf
 Cereal bars
 Fruit bars e.g. school bar, fruit flakes
 Rice cakes/ oat cakes
 Dried fruit mixes
 Crackers/ Crispbread
 Jelly sweets e.g. jelly babies, jelly beans
 Jelly snack pots
 Breakfast cereal snack boxes
 Pasta/ rice salads
 Spreads e.g. jam/ honey
 Juice/ smoothie cartons
Sports foods
 Sports bars
 Sports drinks/ gels
 Sports gels

Protein foods

No access to refrigeration
 Liquid meal replacements
 Foil packs of tuna or salmon
 Tins of fish e.g. tuna, salmon
 John west – light lunch meals
 Long life milk/ milkshakes/ yoghurt
 Snack pots rice pudding
Access to refrigeration
 Lean meat – e.g. ham, chicken, turkey
 Cottage cheese
 Low fat cheese
 Low fat milk/ milkshakes/ yoghurt
Sports Foods
 Sports recovery shakes
 Sports protein shakes
 Protein bar

2. Keep things varied

- Ensure you have a variety of snacks available as your taste preferences may change throughout the competition day
- Pack extra snacks to accommodate flavour changes

3. Think of your appetite

Grazing throughout the day on small nutritious snacks may adequately meet your nutritional goals but may not satisfy your appetite:

- Plan to have your largest snack/ small meal during your longest break
- Pack snacks that may be similar to your everyday foods e.g. breakfast cereals can be taken as handy snacks

Developing a competition day plan

1. Breakfast

On a competition day it is important to consume a good breakfast as depending on your competition day schedule this may be the only full meal you are able to fit in. Breakfast should provide a good source of fuel (carbohydrate) and you should ensure that you consume adequate fluids with your breakfast to ensure you are hydrated at the start of your first race. Aim to have your breakfast 2-4 hours before your first match. Breakfast options should be low in fat as fat slows down the release of important nutrients such as carbohydrate. Good examples include:

- Cereal/ porridge with milk (add banana/ dried fruit to increase carbohydrate)
- Hot cross buns with Jam/ honey/ marmalade
- Crumpets with jam/ honey/ marmalade
- Muffins with jam/ honey/ marmalade
- Toast/ bread/ rolls with jam/ honey/ marmalade
- Baked beans/ tinned spaghetti on toast
- Pancakes with fruit and honey

**Having fruit juice with your breakfast increases the carbohydrate content*

2. Recovery from matches

If recovery time <2 hours – main priority is to refuel and rehydrate as this will also act as preparation for you next match.

Rehydrate: Aim to drink 150% of sweat losses. Using sports drink will help replace sodium that has been lost through sweat.

Refuel: Intake a combination of carbohydrate based snacks (approx 1g/kg body mass).

Examples of carbohydrate based snacks include:

Carbohydrate based snacks

Fruit Snacks

1 x Raisins snack pack (42g)	30g Carbs
7 x Dried Apricots (50g)	20g Carbs
Dried peaches (50g)	19g Carbs
1 x large banana	25g Carbs
1 x pear (med)	16g Carbs
1 x apple (med)	13g Carbs

Fruit Bars

Fruit bowl fruit flakes	16g Carbs
Fruit bowl school bars (20g)	15g Carbs
Naturo fruit bar (20g bar)	15g Carbs
Jordans Frusli All Fruit Bars (30g)	22-24g Carbs

Cereal Bars

Kellogg's Oat Bakes (50g Bar)	33g Carbs
Kellogg's Nutri-grain Elevenses (45g Bar)	30g Carbs
Kellogg's Nutri-grain Bar (30g Bar)	25g Carbs
Alpen Groove Bar (32g Bar)	25g Carbs
Alpen-Raspberry and yoghurt (28g Bar)	20-22g Carbs
Special K Bar	16-17g Carbs
Go Ahead Yoghurt Breaks	26g Carbs

Nestle Fitnessse

18g Carbs

Drinks

Pineapple Juice (300ml)	33g Carbs
Apple juice (300ml)	33g Carbs
Orange Juice (350ml)	32g Carbs
Fruit Smoothies (250ml)	30-40g Carbs
Yazoo (500ml)	49-55g Carbs
Friji (500ml)	53-63g Carbs
For Goodness Shakes (500ml)	46-60g Carbs

Other

2 x slices malt loaf	46g Carbs
4 x Jaffa cakes	37g Carbs
2 x Scotch pancakes	33g Carbs
Low fat rice pudding (150g pot)	26g Carbs
Snack a Jacks (30g)	24g Carbs
4 x cream crackers	22g Carbs
4 x rice cakes	24g Carbs
1 x tube fruit pastilles	45g Carbs
Jelly Babies (50g)	39g Carbs
Iced bun (40g)	22g Carbs

Sports Foods

Lucozade Body fuel (500ml)	33g Carbs
Lucozade Hydrate (500ml)	20g Carbs
SIS Go Electrolyte (500ml)	38g Carbs
Lucozade Energy Bar (1 x bar)	34g Carbs
SIS Go bar (1 x bar)	46g Carbs

Light carbohydrate based meal ideas (depending on individual tolerance):

2 slices white bread (thick) & 2 heaped tsp jam	66g Carbs
2 slices fruit loaf & 2 heaped tsp jam	62g Carbs
Rice krispies (40g/ 2 small boxes) & 300ml skimmed milk	51g Carbs
2 x hot cross buns & 2 heaped tsp jam	82g Carbs
1 x bagel with 2 heaped tsp honey	73g Carbs
Baked potato (med) with baked beans (1/2 tin)	90g Carbs

Recovery time >2 hrs

When recovery time is > 2 hours a more substantial carbohydrate based meal may be better tolerated. A protein source may also be added during the longer breaks (3-4 hours) which will help aid muscle recovery:

- **Carbohydrate options** e.g. pasta, rice, cous cous, bread, cereal, potatoes
- **Protein options** e.g. lean meat, cottage cheese, tuna, low fat milk, low fat yoghurt

Recovery at the end of the competition day

It is very important to recover adequately at the end of your competition day. This is especially important if you are competing on consecutive days. Your recovery should start immediately after you're your last race:

- 1g/kg body mass carbohydrate
 - o i.e. 70g of carbohydrate for a 70kg athlete
- 10-20g lean protein
- Rehydrate

This should be followed by a balanced meal (containing carbohydrate/ protein/ vegetables) approx 1-2 hours after finishing.