



Discovery Sports Center | 18031 Central Park Circle | Boyds, MD 20841

T. 301-515-3803 | F. 301-515-3806 | washingtonfreedom.com

Nutrition Information

Athletes need to make good food choices. Eating a variety of foods from all food groups will keep your body healthy and provide energy for training and games. Do not “diet” or try to lose weight during your season. Soccer is a demanding sport; your body needs a lot of energy for you to perform at your best each day and throughout the season.

It takes about 3-4 hours to digest a large meal, 2-3 hours to digest a small meal, 1-2 hours for small meal, less than 1 hour for a small carbohydrate snack. Plan your meals and snacks around training times and games.

Do not skip Breakfast! During exercise your body pulls glycogen from your muscles and liver for energy. Your glycogen levels in your liver is lower in the morning, you need to refuel your body to replace the energy used while you sleep.

FOOD = ENERGY

CARBOHYDRATE

Carbohydrate is the best fuel for working muscles. If you do not eat enough carbohydrate, you will feel fatigued toward the end of a match or training. Include carbohydrates in all meals and snacks. Sports drinks contain carbohydrate, choose drinks that provide 14-19 g per 8 ounces (or one cup). Higher levels of carbohydrate can slow absorption. Gatorade and Powerade are good choices.

PROTEIN

Protein is important for muscle growth and repair damage after exercise. It is also needed to make red blood cells that move oxygen to your muscles, and boosts your immune system. Good choices of protein include fish, chicken, turkey, beef, low-fat milk, cheese, yogurt, eggs, beans and nuts. If you are vegetarian, make sure you get enough protein!

FAT

Fat provides energy, helps your body use some vitamins. Most people have too much fat in their diets. Do not eat high fat meals before training or games (it takes longer to digest fat). Limit the amount of high fat foods you eat (fried foods, large burgers, bacon, sausage, biscuits, cookies, potato chips, pizza loaded with pepperoni and sausage, foods loaded with mayo or cream).

VITAMINS AND MINERALS

Eat a variety of foods from all food groups (milk/dairy, fruits, vegetables, grains, lean meats/proteins) to meet your vitamin and mineral needs. Calcium is especially important to keep bones strong and prevent muscle cramps. Calcium requirements are 1000-1200 mg per day. Include 3-4 servings of dairy per day. ***See attached list for high calcium foods.***

FLUIDS

You can lose 1.5 to 2 liters of fluid in sweat during games. Losses can be even more in hot weather. Hydration is important for good performance and health. Check the color of your urine, if it looks dark like apple juice you are dehydrated and you need to drink more fluids. If it looks like lemonade you are getting enough fluids.

SO WHEN & WHAT SHOULD I EAT???

Carbohydrates

3-4 hours before exercise eat 200-300g carbohydrate

Choose foods such as rice, pasta, cereals, potatoes, yogurt, smoothies, vegetables, fruits, crackers, breads, rolls or muffins

1 hour before exercise eat 50-75 g carbohydrate

Choose granola bar, ½ bagel, large banana, graham crackers, energy bar (do not choose high protein before an event, slows digestion)

Within an 20-30 minutes after exercise 70-105 g carbohydrate

Additional 2 hours after exercise 70-105 g carbohydrate, to replace the energy stores that were depleted during exercise.

See attached list of how many grams of carbohydrate are in specific foods.

Protein

Include protein at all meals. Limit the amount of protein 1 hour before a match or training due to slower digestion. Include protein in your meal/snack within 20-30 minutes after exercise to help repair muscles. Depending on your weight you need about 63-95 g of protein per day.

Fluids

2-3 hours before training or match drink 2-3 cups of fluid

30 minutes before training or match drink about 1 cup of fluid

During half time drink 1.5-2 cups of fluid

After training or match drink 2.5-3 cups per pound lost (weight yourself before and after games to determine fluid loss)

CARBOHYDRATE FOODS

Each serving equals about 25 g of carbohydrate

Grains	Dairy Products and Other Beverages	Beans and Starchy Vegetables
2 slices of bread ½ large bagel 1 english muffin 1 cup oatmeal 1 cup ready to eat cereal 1 package cheese crackers 2 fig cookie bars ½ cup rice ½ cup cooked pasta 5 cups popped popcorn ½ large soft pretzel 17 mini pretzels 1 12-inch flour tortilla 1 oz tortilla chips with ¼ cup salsa	2 cups milk (lowfat or skim) 1 cup lowfat choc milk 1 cup yogurt 1 cup soy milk 1 package hot chocolate	½ cup black beans ½ cup baked beans ¾ cup kidney beans ½ cup lima beans ½ cup corn ¾ cup mashed potatoes ½ medium baked potato with skin
Energy Drinks, Bars, Gels	Mixed Dishes	Fruit and Juice
2 cups sport drinks (6%-8% carbohydrate containing) 1 energy bar (average) 1 energy gel	1 slice thin crust cheese pizza or with veggies ½ slice thick crust pizza or with veggies 1 small bean and rice burrito ½ cup beans and rice 1 ½ cup chicken noodle soup ¾ cup tomato soup 1 cup cooked ramen noodles ½ six inch sub sandwich ½ cup macaroni and cheese	2 cups fresh berries 1 ½ cups any cut fresh fruit 1 large orange 1 medium apple ¾ cup orange juice ½ cup cranberry juice

HIGH CALCIUM FOODS

Each serving equals about 1 serving of dairy

1 cup milk

1 cup yogurt

2 cups cottage cheese

2 slices of cheese pizza

1.5 ounces of cheese

1 cup Total cereal

1 cup enriched soy milk

Broccoli and spinach also contain some calcium (3 cups cooked provide the same amount of calcium as 1 cup milk)

Prepared by René Tolley, RD LDN

Additional Questions, email renetolley@gmail.com