



COMPETITION NUTRITION ADVICE FOR SWIMMERS

When preparing to compete at a swimming competition you need to pay careful attention to what you eat. Read on to find out what to eat the day before the event and during the day.

The Day Before the Meet

The day before the meet eat meals and snacks high in complex carbohydrates. You need to keep those glycogen stores topped up.

- Drink fluids little and often to stay properly hydrated.
- Eat little and often – every two to four hours to keep your blood sugar levels steady and fuel your muscles in preparation for your event.
- Avoid big meals or over-eating in the evening – this will almost certainly make you feel uncomfortable and lethargic the next day.
- Try to stick to familiar foods. Curries, spicy foods, baked beans and pulses (unless you are used to eating them) can cause gas and bloating, so avoid eating anything that may cause stomach discomfort the next day. It's best to stick to foods that you are familiar and compatible with!

The Morning of the Event

- Never swim on empty. Even if you feel nervous, make breakfast happen. Stick to easily digested foods – cereal with milk, porridge, banana with yoghurt, some fruit or toast with jam.
- If you're really struggling, try liquid meals such as milkshakes, yoghurt drinks or a smoothie.
- Rehearse your competition meal routine in training so you know exactly what works/agrees with you.

Snacks Between Swims

- Snack as soon as possible after your swim to give yourself time to recover/digest if you are competing again.
- Aim for complex carbohydrates again - high fat and simple sugar foods will do you no favours in competition.
- If you can't stomach anything solid try sports drinks, flavoured milk or diluted juice that will help replenish your energy supplies and assist the recovery of aching muscles.

The list below offers great food options to be snacking on around training and during competition. Remember to keep eating healthy foods in your regular diet.

Here are some you can try:

- Water, diluted fruit juice with a pinch of salt or a sports drink
- Pasta salad
- Plain sandwiches e.g. chicken, tuna, cheese with salad, banana, egg
- Bananas, grapes, apples, plums, pears
- Dried fruit e.g. raisins, apricots, mango
- Smoothies
- Crackers, bread sticks and rice cakes
- Mini-pancakes, fruit buns
- Cereal, cereal bars, fruit bars, sesame snaps
- Yoghurt and yoghurt drinks
- Jelly
- SMALL bags of unsalted nuts e.g. peanuts, cashews, almonds
- Prepared vegetable crudité's e.g. carrots, peppers, cucumber and celery

Please note energy gels are not recommended for children and will not aid performance. Energy gels are designed to replace fluid and minerals lost through sweating during intense exercise lasting over an hour.