

**Nutritional Tips for Counties.**

**What Should I eat Pre-event?**

Swimmers should aim to have a meal which is high in complex carbohydrates between 2 – 3 hours prior to a competition. Carbohydrates come in two forms, simple and complex. Complex carbohydrates are the preferred source of energy prior to exercise as the energy is slowly released, compared to simple carbohydrates which provide a quick energy burst.
Examples include:

* Breakfast cereal (complex carbohydrate) + low fat milk
* Fruit salad + low fat yoghurt
* Sandwich (whole grain bread) with lean meat or cheese & salad.
* Cinnamon porridge with bananas & berries.

**1 hour before the race to boost energy levels, good snacks include: Fruit smoothies, low fat milk, fruit, dried fruit and cereal bars (high in fibre & whole grain sourced).**

**What should I eat during the competition**

It is essential that swimmers ensure they eat sufficient amounts of food and drink during competitions. Swimmers should aim to eat foods they are familiar with to avoid affecting their performance. Planning prior to competitions by preparing foods and storing in a cooler or freezer bag will allow the swimmer easy access and avoiding unhealthy snacking at the venue.

* **If more than 1- 2 hours between races:** Sandwiches with whole grain bread, salad and lean meats are good choices, pasta , rice & noodles with a low fat sauce or toppings are also good choices. Ensure to keep well hydrated with both water and sports drinks.
* **30 – 60 minutes between races:** Sports bars, low fat/ high fibre cereal bars, sandwiches with jam, banana, peanut butter or low fat spreads are good choices. Also a range fruit in small pots or packets of dried fruit are great options.
* **Less than 30 minutes between races:** Water with a pinch of salt and natural fruit juices are the best options as they are easily absorbed.

How should I aim to recover post event?

It is very important to ensure that swimmers recover both physically through foam rolling and stretching, it is equally important to recover on a nutritional basis. Carbohydrate and protein rich meals are essential to aid replenishing muscle glycogen stores and for the recovery of muscle tissue growth & repair.

* Within 30 minutes of finishing a competition a recovery snack should be consumed. Examples include: a bowl of cereal with fruit and low fat milk, cereal bars, fruit pots, sandwiches with salad & lean meat.
* A substantial meal should follow within 2 – 3 hours of finishing. An example could be: A vegetable stir fry with lean meat, noodles and low fat sauce.
* Ensure to keep well hydrated after the competition also. Water with a pinch of salt and natural fruit juices (Red fruits) is my recommendation.