

SC UNITED FC PERFORMANCE NUTRITION

PREPARING FOR SOCCER GAMES

Eating properly before, during, and after games will have a positive effect on your stamina, muscular endurance, concentration, and will delay fatigue.

Your everyday eating is your best preparation for matches:

- Don't miss meals - eat something every 3 - 4 hours
- Make every meal and snack count nutritionally
- At least one-third of each main meal should be a carbohydrate food – rice, pasta, potato, bread, cereal or oatmeal
- About one-third should be a lean protein food – lean meat, chicken or turkey, fish, eggs
- One-third needs to be vegetables, salad, or fruit
- Snacks should be carbohydrate-based, but not high in fat or sugar!
- Drink water with every meal and snack, and stay hydrated while you are exercising

Pre-game eating – the basics:

- Your evening meal the night before is an ideal time to prepare nutritionally
- Find out when your game is scheduled - aim to have your last main meal at least 3 hours beforehand
- Have a light carbohydrate snack ½ - 1 hour before kick-off.

Evening meal the night before:

This meal is very important especially if you have a morning game, and could be any of these:

- Chicken, grilled or baked with vegetables and rice

Supplementation:

- Aim to fine-tune your diet so that it meets your optimal nutrition needs without additional vitamins or minerals
- If your diet is less than perfect due to illness, injury or travel schedules, taking a multivitamin & mineral can help your nutritional status short term
- Avoid "energy" drinks that contain caffeine or similar substances – they do NOT provide the muscle fuel you need
- Always check with your coach, trainer or manager before taking any supplements to make sure they are clean, safe and legal. Just before a game is NOT the time to try out a new supplement!
- Supplements are NOT a substitute for proper preparation before a big game – training, rest, and optimal nutrition

THE BASICS

STAY HYDRATED

EAT LEAN AND CLEAN

BUILD UP MUSCLE ENERGY RESERVES



SCUFC NUTRITION

Optimal nutrition builds winning soccer

Contact Kathleen Pollard, RD, LD @
kathleenpollardrd@gmail.com for additional questions

- Pasta with tomato sauce and lean meat, chicken, or fish and little cheese
- Fish, grilled or baked, with mashed potato and vegetables
- Stir-fry (minimal oil) made with lean meat or shrimp and diced vegetables
- Baked potato with tuna, chili, or cottage cheese, plus mixed salad – go easy on butter, cheese, sour cream
- Sub with lean protein (turkey, ham, tuna, or egg) and salad vegetables (minimal fat spreads)

Pre-game breakfasts:

- Cereal (not frosted or honey coated), low-fat milk
- Eggs with toast
- Oatmeal with a little raisins, sugar or honey
- Lean breakfast meat (turkey bacon, ham) with bread/bagel
- Whole-wheat pancakes/waffles with fruit, nuts, and a little syrup or peanut butter

*Add fresh fruit or fruit juice to your breakfast choice

Pre-game light snacks include:

- Granola bars
- Low-fat yogurt with banana
- Dried fruit with nuts
- Cereal with low-fat milk
- Bread or roll with low-fat cheese or peanut butter
- Fresh fruit

During the game:

- If you plan your pre-match meals well you should not need to eat at half time
- Try to drink a sports drink to replace salt loss and to support blood sugar whenever you have a chance
- If you do need to eat something at half time- bananas, granola bars, or plain crackers are your best options – try them out in practice first!

After the final whistle:

Have a snack or drink containing carbohydrate and protein within 30 minutes of playing. Good options include:

- Low-fat chocolate milk
- Granola bar and Trail Mix
- Low-fat yogurt and banana
- Aim to eat a main meal within 2 - 3 hours of the final whistle

Hydration:

Drink at least 8 cups of water a day, in addition to other drinks

- Before the game - drink water throughout the day, and drink an extra cup of water or sports drink ½ hr before your game (sport drinks are best if you tend to cramp)
- During the game - drink water and sports drinks at half time and any injury time
- After the game - drink water as soon as you finished, especially important if you are playing again within the next 24 hours - you need to replace sweat and breath lost during the game
- Go easy on caffeine drinks and avoid alcohol to maintain optimal hydration

Traveling Tips:

When traveling it is very easy to get dehydrated:

- Drink about 2 cups of water for every hour traveled
- Be aware of your new climate - if hotter or more humid (or at higher altitude) you will need to drink more
- Use the P-chart idea to check your hydration status
- Sitting in the vehicle does not use much energy, so eat small light low fat meals every 3 hours or so
- Avoid unfamiliar foods or dishes just before a game
- Choose fast food carefully; avoid foods fried or cooked in rich sauces – Subway (or similar) is a good option
- Never assume that where you are going will have the foods and drinks you want - bring a supply of your preferred snacks and drinks e.g. granola bars, fruit, cereal, sports drinks and shakes
- Get plenty of rest – sleep when you have the chance!