

We hope the below information in relation to pre-match meals enables you to make better more informed choices about what you eat and when you eat it prior to a game in order to allow you to perform optimally.

It is vital that your experiment with the information below and find out what works **best for you**. Avoid introducing new ideas or regimes

Proper fuelling prior to a match will not make you a better soccer player, but it will allow you to maximise the skills that you do have and won't be the reason why you didn't perform as well as you could have on the day!

Introduction

It is widely accepted that otherwise healthy soccer players should source their energy from food in the following **proportions**. **Carbohydrates, 70+%, Protein 10% - 15% and Fats 15% - 20%**. On the days leading up to a game the proportions of carbohydrates should be increased. Immediately following the game, refuelling of muscles should take place almost exclusively from carbohydrate sources.

Before The Game

A pre-match meal should ideally be consumed **2 - 3 hours before the game**, and be made up predominantly of complex carbohydrates (starchy foods) rather than simple one's (sugars). By choosing to eat the right foods at the right time prior to competition you will help ensure that amongst other things: -

- Your Muscle Glycogen Stores Are Optimised For The Game.
- You Avoid Pre-Match Hunger.
- You Body Has Had Time To Digest And Absorb The Meal.

Once you start exercising your body will send less blood to your digestive system and more to your muscles, so ensure you eaten in plenty of time so by the start of the game you've cleared your stomach and are not going to carry around excess weight in the form of food stuck in you stomach as your body is busy elsewhere supporting your increased muscle activity.

Try and include the following foods in your pre-match meal: -

- Breads Rolls, Toast, Crumpets,
- Potatoes Boiled, Baked, Low Fat <5% Oven Chips,
- Pasta Spaghetti, Pot Noodles,
- Rice Boiled Brown or White,
- Fruit & Cereals Watch the fat & Sugar content!

To make the meal more interesting you may like to add smaller portions of the following foods together with some vegetables of your choice: -

- Chicken Grilled, Baked Without Skin,
- Fish Tuna, Salmon, Sardines
- Beans Baked, On Potato Or Toast
- Honey On Toast Or In Sandwiches,
- Jam On Toast Or In Sandwiches,
- Milk For Cereals,

Provided you bear the above proportions in mind you may change and substitute foods as you wish according to your individual liking, but do try and consume **complex carbohydrates** rather than simple sugars with your pre-match meal as they allow for a more steady and sustained release of fuel.



You can get an idea of which carbohydrate are absorbed quickly, the simple sugary ones and which are gradually taken up by the body, the starchy ones, by looking at 'The Glycemic Index of a food. This rates the speed of absorption from 100 (Glucose) to lesser rated foods - All you need to know is that the lower the number, the slower the carbohydrate is absorbed.

One hour prior to kick off the consumption of a **small** amount of simple sugar in the form of a piece of fruit, Jaffa Cake, energy bar etc. will ensure your muscle fuel levels are peaking for the start of the game. It is important that if consumed the **amount is small**, previously tested and consists mainly of simple carbohydrate (sugar).

During The Game

Provide the above pre-match preparation has been followed it is unlikely that you will need more fuel during the first half of the game. **Hydration** is likely to be a more of an issue.

Recent research has suggested that consuming a **SMALL** amount of simple carbohydrate (sugar), during competitions, have lead to increases in energy and distance travelled following ingestion. Therefore a sports gel, a **FEW** jelly-babies, or a cube or two of jelly at half time may give you the top up of energy you need to keep going longer. **A whole packet is unlikely too!!!!**

After The Game

At the completion of the game, theres a 30 minute 'Carb Re-Loading window' you should try immediately, to start replacing fluids and replenishing your muscle fuel stores with carbohydrate - This means as your walking off the pitch and certainly before you shower. The addition of approximately 20 - 30% protein is thought to increase the rate of muscle glycogen replenishment so if you have a game or competition later the same this may help you to prepare even more. Skimmed milk appears to be better at rehydrating than water and some of the other commercially available drinks. - Yazoo's contain the right amount of Carbohydrate and protein and have the added benefit of being made with skimmed milk.

PhizBiz Tips

Eating is probably the last thing you want to do following a heavy session so you may like to try a chilled, high carb with protein drink. 'Yazoo' meets the current carb/protein requirements. **80% Carbs 20% Protien.**

Hydration - A 1% - 2% reduction in hydration can lead to significant, decrease in physical and mental performance. - Check your urine -if it's clear or light green and you're urinating frequently then you're probably sufficiently hydrated. If it's dark and smells, your probable not! Ask for a self-test sheet if you need to work out how much fluid you lose during a game. We can be more precise by testing your urine with our urine osmolality checker.

Alcohol - **Dehydrates you** and should be avoided in the 48hours prior to competition. Although your liver may have eliminated it in the few hours (20mg/hr) following ingestion, recent research suggests its effects on performance and your nervous system can last up to and beyond 48hrs.

Caffeine - Is no longer a controlled substance in football. It can be performance enhancing in certain circumstances. There is emerging evidence that if the right amounts are taken at the right times it can improve performance in soccer. If you know how to use it properly then carry on. If you want further information about how to use it properly then ask, otherwise unless you've tried it and it works for you then avoid it.

Hypo -Tonic Drink - Mix your own in your drinks bottle - 1/3rd unsweetened orange juice, 2/3rds water with a very small pinch of salt - to speed up the absorption of the fluid

