

# ***Nutrition Overview - Preparing for 2006 Alberta Open***

## **1. Hydration, the importance of Water;**

You must regularly drink fluids for optimal sport performance. Dehydration impairs the body's ability to regulate heat resulting in increased body temperature and an elevated heart rate. This can cause you to feel more fatigued than usual at a given work rate. Your mental function is reduced which reduces motor control, decision making and concentration. Gastric emptying is slowed, resulting in stomach discomfort which is a significant problem if you are eating between games at a big event.

A conditioned athlete is able to store and burn more energy in a shorter time. That means your body releases more heat, requires more cooling, loses more water, and needs more water to replenish its stores. Drinking moderate amounts at frequent intervals is the best strategy during competition. You should have a water bottle at our bench during games.

## **2. Pregame meals (Chaperones will help with this);**

Your responsibility is to fuel yourself well throughout game day. The key is to plan ahead. The best pregame meals are carbohydrate-based: for example, spaghetti and tomato sauce (a little lean meat in the sauce is fine); or potatoes or rice, vegetables, and dinner rolls with a small serving of chicken or other protein. As with any pregame meal, choose foods that you know will settle comfortably and digest easily. Be sure to limit fried and high-fat foods like burgers, fried chicken, french fries, and nachos. These (and similar fast foods) take a long time to digest.

## **3. What are the priorities for recovery nutrition?**

**Refueling;** you should consume carbohydrate - either your next meal, or at least a snack - as soon as possible after an exhausting game, to prepare for the next; **Rehydration;** you will finish competition sessions with some level of fluid deficit. After strenuous games, fluid losses require a focused effort to rehydrate.

**Immune System;** Your immune system is suppressed by intensive game play with effectiveness disturbed during the hours following the activity. This places you at risk of succumbing to illness during this time. There are dietary supplements that can aid the immune system in advance - vitamin C, zinc and echinacea - but these do not provide universal protection. Consuming carbohydrate after a high-intensity session can reduce the disturbance to your immune system. This works, in part, by supplying glucose to fuel the activity of the immune system white cells.

### **Foods to avoid now and during the weekend of the event;**

Candy, sugar, honey; After an initial rise, your blood-sugar level can actually drop below normal, resulting in a sudden feeling of tiredness or fatigue.

Tea, coffee, chocolate, cola; Caffeine consumption leads to dehydration.

Fried foods, high-fat meats, fats, oils, gravies, sour cream, etc. Fat digests slowly and therefore stays in the stomach longer.

Fruit-flavored drinks Many drinks contain little fruit juice and a lot of sugar. Read the label.

## **What else should you be doing to take care of yourself?**

**SLEEP!** You will need as much pre-event sleep as you can get. The bus ride will drain you incredibly. If you start well rested then you will recover much more quickly on Thursday. Please note that the bus WILL INCLUDE QUIET TIME FOR EVERYONE, bring a pillow.