Nutrition.  
  
  
What should a football player eat?  
  
Maintaining a good diet doesn’t ensure good performance during a match/practice, but it will improve the potential to reach a maximum level of performance. Here is some Information on the types of foods a football player should ideally try to eat and use.   
  
Food contains carbohydrate, and fat as well as other important nutrients such as vitamins and minerals.  
  
Carbohydrates   
  
Carbohydrate can be divided into a simple and complex form. Examples of the two types of carbohydrate are shown below.  
  
Simple carbohydrate Complex carbohydrate  
Low-fat confectionery (sweets / candy) Potatoes  
Cakes Vegetables  
White Sugar Grain  
Jam Bread  
Soft Drinks (e.g. Coca-cola) Spaghetti / Pasta / Rice  
Fruit   
  
The first few hours after exercise simple carbohydrate can be used to rebuild sugar levels (glycogen stores) at a faster rate. However After 24 hours there is no difference in the two types of carbohydrate. Complex carbohydrate has a high higher nutritional value as it also contain minerals, vitamins, and fibre and therefore this should be preferred.  
  
It is Important that a players diet consists of a high proportion of carbohydrates. Below are some suggestions on how to increase the daily intake of carbohydrates.  
  
• Eat a large portion of potatoes, pasta, or rice with a hot meal  
• Eat large portions of vegetables  
Boiled or raw vegetables with a hot meal  
Raw vegetables as snacks between meals and as a supplement to lunch  
• Eat a lot of bread  
Cut thick slices  
make sandwiches  
eat bread with a hot meal  
• Eat a lot of fruit  
as a snack between meals  
as dessert  
with cereals  
  
Protein  
  
This is primary used for building up tissues, such as muscles. And this can be found in the following food:  
  
• Eggs  
• Milk  
• Meat  
• Fish  
  
Also found in vegetables and grain products (vegetable protein).  
  
Fat  
  
Here are some easy guidelines to look in the player’s diet:  
• Limit the intake of French fries, potato crisps etc  
replace with boiled of baked potatoes  
• Limit the use of butter  
replace with vegetable margarine  
• Limit the intake of whipped cream, cream cheese, etc  
replace with low-fat substitutes, e.g. low-fat yoghurt  
• Limit the use of margarine for baking and frying  
replace with vegetable oil  
• Limit the intake of meat, sauces, and other fatty foods  
• Limit the intake of whole fat milk  
replace with low-fat or preferably, skimmed milk  
  
Minerals and Vitamins  
  
Food and drink supply the body with fluids, energy-producing substrates, and other important components, such as salt, minerals, and vitamins. In a well-balanced diet most nutrients are supplied in sufficient amounts.  
One of these is iron which can be found in the following foods:  
• Animal Organs (liver, heart, and kidneys)  
• Dried Fruits  
• Bread  
• Nuts  
• Strawberries  
  
  
A Diet of a football player  
  
An Example of a Professional football player’s diet for one day is described here in detail. The diet is well balanced, supplying sufficient amounts of carbohydrates, minerals, and vitamins.   
  
Breakfast  
Food: Four slices of white bread with jam, two whole meal bread rolls with a little butter and jam, with two small tubs of yoghurt.  
Fluid: Two cups of tea (without sugar)  
  
Lunch  
Food: Four slices of whole meal bread with a small amount of butter, one egg, two tomatoes, two packets of raisins, two bananas, and a bowl of salad.  
Fluid: Three glasses of skimmed milk and one cup of coffee (without sugar)  
  
Dinner  
Food: One bowl (large) of spaghetti with minced meat (beef), half an onion, one tin of skinned tomatoes, and a bowl of salad.  
Fluid: Two glasses of skimmed milk.  
  
The three main meals provided an energy intake of approximately 80% of the daily intake of food, of which 63% was from carbohydrate. The remaining energy was obtained from snacks between meals.  
  
Snacks  
  
Food: One Apple, one packet of raisins, one bag of sweets  
Fluid: Two cups of coffee (without sugar) and one litre of juice.  
  
Total for the whole day: 70% carbohydrate, 17% fat and 13% protein.  
  
  
  
Fluid Intake  
  
Recommendations regarding fluid intake that may be helpful to a player  
  
• Drink plenty of fluid during the day more than just to quench thirst  
• Drink only small amounts in one intake not more than 300 ml every 15 minutes during sessions and matches.  
• Drink a lot after a training session/match – even several hours afterwards  
• Experiment with the amounts of water that you intake during training sessions to work out the best intake of you own needs.  
  
Water is the best fluid to drink during training program because it has not added sugar supplements.  
Drinks such as Cola and frizzy drinks are not recommended because it takes longer to enter the blood stream.  
  
  
I hope this hand-out will give you some decent feedback to which is the right and wrong types of food a player should choose to eat and drink before and after both training and matches. A good well balanced diet can help maximize performance for longer during matches and training sessions. All the information in the hand-out is as a guide towards the nutritional side of football and sports training and shouldn’t be used as a rule towards your intake of both food and fluid.