Pre-Training Fuel Guide

NUTRITION & HYDRATION

NUTRITION & HYDRATION

FUEL | HYDRATE | RECOVER

1 WHAT PRE-TRAINING FUEL SHOULD DO

Pre-training food should give a young player useful energy while still feeling comfortable enough to run, change direction and play. Familiar, easy-to-digest foods are usually the best choice.

IF TRAINING IS SOON AFTER SCHOOL

- Banana or other fruit + yoghurt.
- Toast, bagel or small sandwich.
- Cereal with milk.
- Oat bar or simple cereal bar plus water.
- Crackers with cheese or a small yoghurt drink.

IF THERE IS MORE TIME

- Normal family meal containing a carbohydrate source, vegetables/fruit and protein.
- Rice, pasta or potatoes with a familiar protein food.
- Sandwich/wrap plus fruit and yoghurt.
- Breakfast-style meal such as eggs, toast and fruit.

2 A SIMPLE TIMING APPROACH

- **2-4 hours before:** a normal meal is usually suitable if that fits the family schedule.
- **1-2 hours before:** choose a smaller snack or mini-meal that the player knows sits well.
- **Within the final hour:** if hungry, keep it light and familiar rather than trying to fit in a large meal.

3 FOODS THAT CAN CAUSE PROBLEMS

There is no universal banned-food list. However, some players feel uncomfortable after very large portions, very fatty or fried foods, highly spicy meals, or unusually high-fibre foods shortly before exercise. Individual tolerance matters.

4 HYDRATION WITH THE SNACK

- Have water available with the pre-training snack.
- Players coming straight from school should be encouraged to drink during the afternoon rather than arriving very thirsty.
- Hot weather and longer sessions increase the need for a clear hydration plan.

BEST PRE-TRAINING FOOD = food the player knows, enjoys and digests comfortably.

5 COACH MESSAGE TO PLAYERS

Fueling does not need to be perfect. Consistency matters: eat regular meals, bring a sensible snack when needed, carry water, and avoid arriving at training having eaten nothing for many hours.

This resource provides general nutrition and hydration guidance for young players and is not individual medical or dietetic advice. Needs vary with age, growth, health, allergies, activity level and conditions. Parents and clubs should seek advice from a qualified healthcare professional or registered dietitian where appropriate.