Top 10 NUTRITION Strategies for Soccer

Develop a consistent FUELING routine

Recognize that nutrition & hydration contribute to soccer performance, growth, and health.
Athletes' bodies perform better when they are fueled consistently...5-6 times daily.
Build treats in as a "normal" part of the plan. Food should not be used as a reward or punishment.
There is no off-limits food. 10% of an athlete's diet can be "junk food".

Enjoy what you eat

Don't eat it if you don't like it!
Find creative ways to obtain all important nutrients and include favorites.

Eat frequently

Eat 3 meals and at least 2 snacks each day.
BREAKFAST is extremely important!
Spread calories equally throughout the day...many athletes are "bottom-heavy"
Plan ahead with snacks – in practice bag, car glove box, backpack, designated kitchen spot

Eating the right amount

Calorie counting rarely necessary, but most soccer players need their weight X 10 plus 1200 for girls and 2000 for boys during moderate to hard training. They need less during the off-season and more during very intense training periods.

Understand the important breakdown of carbs, fat, and protein

60% carbs, 15% protein, 25% fat
Common problems for soccer players: too much fat, too little protein, too many carbs or the worst types of carbs.
Include protein in every meal...meat/milk/dairy/nuts or peanut butter/eggs/soy/hummus.
Carbs- best choices are fruits, veggies, whole grains.
Sugar- look to reduce added sugars in daily diet.
Use sugar when your body most needs it (DURING and AFTER soccer).
Carbs should fluctuate with training (but not protein).
Increase HEALTHY FATS: nuts, fish, oils, avocado and decrease LESS HEALTHY FATS: fried foods, fatty meats, desserts, whole milk, butter, creamy dressings and sauces

Vitamins & minerals

Food first, multivitamin (with 100% DV) as a back-up
Best way to get all needed: fruits, veggies, grains, dairy, nuts, lean meat
IRON- needs to be a big focus for soccer players, both males and females

Hydration

You're drinking enough if pee is clear and you're not thirsty!
WATER is best beverage all day, sports drinks BEFORE, DURING, AFTER training.
Energy drinks are different from sports drinks!

Before, during & after training

Before: at least 30 grams of carbs within 1 hour of starting training
During: 30 grams of carbs and at least 3-5 cups of fluids EVERY HOUR
RECOVERY NUTRITION- important to refuel with carbs and protein within 30 minutes of finishing workouts

Pre-game meal

3-4 hours before game: MIXED meal of carbs and protein, low fat, fluids, 1 fruit or veggie, salt, fluids
1 hour before first event: 30 grams of carbs to "top off"
Bring foods and drinks to games and tournaments...have carbs if you have <1 hour between games, carbs and protein if you have longer

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