

April 2022

Hey there MTB riders!

It's your Stanford Children's Sports Medicine Team here! I know you must be as excited as we are for the upcoming races. You're going to crush it out there! You may know us as the "bone experts", and we do know all about how to care for your bones, muscles, and sports-related injuries. However, it's equally as important to take into consideration our nutrition and hydration needs. Especially on those hotter days! In this blurb, we're going to talk all about nutrition for recovery and hydration.

Nutrition for Recovery

For optimal performance, an athlete needs to recover from practice or a game as quickly as possible. Maximizing recovery is essential to maintain performance at a high level.

Muscle glycogen is the body's fuel during performance. During an intense workout, your muscles use up most of their glycogen stores. Before your body will be ready to perform again, you need to reload your muscles with glycogen.

The body is most effective at refilling muscle glycogen stores immediately after exercise. Eating a small snack with mostly carbohydrates and some protein within 30 minutes of finishing your activity has been shown to significantly increase the body's ability to restore muscle glycogen – thus maximizing your recovery and future performance.

While most athletes are not hungry immediately after a game or practice, this is the most important time to reload. Next time you step off the practice field, rather than waiting until you get home and shower before hitting the dinner table, grab a quick snack for the ride home. Your body will be better prepared for the next day.

Ideal Recovery Foods

(goal = 30-60 grams of carbohydrate)

Low-fat milk + banana

Whole grain bread and peanut butter

Bagel with cream cheese

Lean turkey + cheese

Granola bar

Fruit smoothie

Trail mix with dried fruit

Hydration

Dehydration can cause your core temperature to increase, which puts you at risk for cramps, heat exhaustion and impairs your performance. Symptoms of dehydration include dizziness, weakness, headache, cramps, confusion, nausea, and decreased performance

Thirst alone is not the best indicator of dehydration or the body's fluid needs. Fluids should be readily available and served in containers that allow adequate volumes to be easily ingested and with minimal interruption.

Drink 16-20 ounces of water or sports drink 2-3 hours before exercise.

During sport, drink early and often.

A good rule of thumb: 8 ounces every 15-20 minutes.

Any fluid loss due to sweating during sport should be replaced within 2 hours from the end of exercise.

Another quick trick to check your hydration status is to look at the color of your urine. It should be clear or a very pale yellow. Anything darker is an indication that you need more fluid...

Many athletes tend to prefer fluids that are cool and flavored which helps promote fluid replacement. Other than tasting better, there is little evidence that drinking a sport drink instead of water, helps with performance or hydration, except in an event that lasts longer than one hour.