

A swimmer needs lots of carbohydrates. It gives you the energy source to exercise. You need to eat quite a bit of it every day, do not wait for the night or day before the meet. Good examples of carbohydrates are: Rice especially brown rice, whole grain pasta, whole grain bread, low calorie cereals, pancakes and potatoes. Nothing fried or with mayonnaise. Many people forget though that fruit is a great carbohydrate source and has natural sugars that will not give you a sugar high. Fruit has the added benefit of having vitamins and minerals, including anti-oxidants.

A side effect of exercising is creating free radicals. Free radicals can do damage to your body especially your muscles. The anti-oxidants absorb free radicals, neutralizing their effect on the body. So..... eat lots of fruit. You can not overdo it.

Your body does not create energy for a meet by eating well the day before. You need to do it for weeks before an important meet.

Drink water, drink water, drink water. Your body needs fluids to work out. You can also drink sports drinks, but you still need to drink a lot of water. You need a big glass before the training, during the training, and also after the training. This is why I always ask you all to bring a water bottle. The Sr. swimmers know that I am happy to refill it for them. Do not drink soda! There nothing in it that is good for you and it has bad side effects. Diet soda may even be worse, but we do not know yet what the long term effect of that will be. Soda as well as candy will give you a sugar high that will make you more tired when it wears off.

Eat protein. It is important in a swimmer's body because it helps to build cells. Your body continually makes new cells and protein helps make those cells stronger.

Good examples of proteins are: Low fat yoghurt, chicken, turkey, low fat milk, and beans.

During a meet it may be necessary to eat snacks, especially if you have to wait long between races. Drinking water is still very important but here is a list of good snacks. Fruit: apples, oranges, grapes, strawberries, cantaloupe, water melon all are good also you can eat a small box of dry cereal, granola, power bar but just a little at the time, ½ a bagel. It is important not to eat too close to a race. You need to give your body time to digest the food. If you eat close to your race energy will go to the digestion that you then will not have for your race.

Your meal before the meet should be at least 2 hour before. If you do not have that amount of time go to the pre meet snacks.

Before meet snacks: Pasta, cereal, pancakes, veggies and fruit.

(Protein you eat the day before the meet not of the meet)

After the warm-up drink fluids. If you have more than an hour before the race you can have some of your during the meet snacks.

During the meet snacks: fruit, rice noodles, low fat cereal, whole wheat crackers, rice cakes.

After the meet snacks: bagels, pasta, fruit, (bananas, strawberries) low fat string cheese, low fat milk, yoghurt, turkey, chicken, potato, rice cakes.

Remember:

1. Carbs before the meet. They digest faster so your stomach will not steal energy from your performance.
2. Proteins the day and all days before the meet and after the meet
3. Most fast food menus are bad for you before, during and after the meet.
4. You need some fats. Vegetarian fat is better than animal fat as a rule.
5. Do not drink caffeinated drinks, because they are dehydrating.