

What to Bring to Meet!

Pack the night before the meet. As you put items in your bag, visualize the entire day of competition: From the moment you plan to wake up, to the moment you walk back through your front door. Make a list of things you can't pack until morning (food or cloths in the wash), make a list. Set that on top of your swim bag before you go to bed.

The obvious things would be a team suit, cap, goggles and a towel in your swim bag. Extra pair of goggles and team cap are wise items to have on hand in case the goggles break or the cap tears. We would like to suggest the following items for swimmers: an extra towel, a team T-shirt or sweatshirt, and shorts or warm up pants. During the cool months, sweats or a deck coat or both will keep the swimmers warm, and don't forget socks and shoes. Some of the pools are cool to the swimmers who may sit around for quite a while between races. Parents, on the other hand, will likely find the spectator seating area hot, so consider wearing a short sleeve shirt, and bringing along a sweatshirt just in case!

Water bottles are a must to prevent swimmers from dehydrating at the meets. If the meet is an outdoor meet, extra water will be needed and don't forget to bring sunscreen. Bottled sports drinks, such as Gatorade, are also acceptable for fluid replacement; however sodas should be reserved for after the meet. Swimmers will get hungry at the meet, so consider bringing bagels, muffins, crackers, fruit, pasta and light snacks; no junk food.

Not all of the pools have enough seating for the swimmers and spectators, so if you aren't there early, the bleachers or shaded seating may be filled up. Many families bring their own chairs and portable, pop-up tents or canopies to the meets, and set up on the deck or lawn areas with the rest of the team. Some swimmers prefer to bring a sleeping bag or blanket to meets to stretch out on. We encourage all swimmers and families to remain in one location. Not only will you get to know your teammates, but also you will be less likely to miss your events as the coaches and other parents will know your location.

There is likely to be 30 minutes or more between events, so swimmers may want to bring cards, books, and games to pass the time. CD players, game boys and other electronic equipment don't do well in a wet environment and have been known to "disappear" at swim meets.

Programs or Heat sheets are usually available for \$5 to \$10, and are sold by the hosting team, usually at the concession stand. Most meets will have a concession stand, but choices are limited and you are paying for convenience, so it is best to bring your own snack and drinks.

If you forget to bring something to a meet, don't panic! Many swim meets have vendors that sell essential items: Caps, goggles, suits, etc. If you forget your goggles — or if they happen to break — you can often purchase another pair at the meet. If there are no vendors at the meet, you can always ask a teammate or another friendly swimmer if they have an extra pair.

Getting the Hang of It

After a couple of swim meets, you'll know exactly what you need to pack. Make sure you pack in plenty of time so that if you remember something later, you still have time to throw it in your bag. Either way, this list will help you get started on packing your bag and easing your nerves before your big meet.

EATING!!

On meet day, good complex carbs such as pasta, baked potato, pancakes (and there are many more), without a lot of butter, sugar, or fats will go a long way towards giving you a lot of energy at a meet. You must allow time for your body to completely digest any food well before you swim. If your body is busy digesting food there will be less energy with which to swim.

Try not to eat anything heavy during a meet if you can. If it is an all day meet, try to find the events with the most time between them to eat a small amount of complex carbs as mentioned above. Less is better but don't starve yourself. Carbohydrates, such as bagels, dry cereal, or granola-type bars, as well as fruit, are all wise choices. Try to stay away from anything too heavy (burgers, hotdogs, fries, etc.) during a meet. Also, please remind swimmers that they are representing TIDE and are responsible for their trash at all meets.

Do not eat candy, soda, or any other high sugar foods during or just prior to a meet. That is probably one of the worst things a swimmer can do and our swimmers work too hard to do that.

Drink water or a sport drink with electrolytes to stay hydrated. Stay away from soda or anything with a lot of sugar.

Do remember to go to the bathroom before you have to think about lining up for your next event. It's hard to swim well on a full bladder.

Make sure to focus on the swimming and cheer on your teammates, watch and see how other kids do things you are having trouble with and get a feel for how you can improve your strokes, turns, and starts. Don't go nuts and tire yourself cheering for someone else.

Give yourself time before your swim to go through your next event mentally. Try to think about the start, the stroke the turn and the finish. Don't forget to think about breaking out, breaststroke pull-down, breathing and strategy for your event. Now try to "visualize" your event several more times before you actually swim it. When you visualize well, you'll swim well.

Do have fun. Have fun doing the best you can.