



The food we eat and its effect on athletic performance is often more psychological than physiological power. Perhaps for the first time you all have devoted time and effort to matching your nutritional habits to that of your physical training. The mind is a powerful thing. When you are standing behind the starting blocks at state meet Swimmers, I want you to look to your left, look to your right and think... "I bet they didn't think about nutrition for the last year like I did." Right away you have an edge to your competitor. Parents of swimmers who don't have the responsibility of their own meal plan, know you've done your best and let your kids know how prepared they are to do their best.

My monthly goal is to keep nutrition a focus and a key part of your swimming training. These monthly nutrition letters each have monthly goals to aim for as well. These goals have hopefully created better nutrition by including:

**1. Lean Protein** – such goals as little or no fast food, consuming low or no fat milk or yogurt, better snack ideas such as low fat cheese, and peanut butter, and enjoying Louisiana Seafood.

**2. Sufficient carbohydrates** and specifically wholesome fiber rich foods – such goals as using whole wheat bread over

white, higher fiber cereals/granola bars, and adding fruits and vegetables to every day! Perhaps the "going to the grocery" newsletter helped you to plan and read labels to purchase better options.

**3. Hydration** – such goals as drinking water throughout the day, all day! In particular the goal of choosing water most often over soft drinks or sports drinks.

While nutrition can be detailed and complicated, is simple = good nutrition in three basic goals. As *State Meet* approaches, the above should continue to be your focus; however, now your daily training changes slightly. As you go into your taper you will be decreasing your energy expenditure so consuming a lot of high calorie, low nutrient-value foods, such as, cookies, cake, candy, and excessive snacks, may likely result in only weight gain and no nutrient benefits. So for this limited time, prior to state meet, try to ditch the junk food. While all foods can fit in moderation, there are times when it is best to avoid certain foods.

#### **State Meet weekend food:**

The sport of swimming provides athletes and nutritionists with a bit of a challenge, in the sense that you do not only have one

event and you are done. Swimmers need energy for a few quick events then hopefully return in the evening for finals, then of course, this is the schedule for a few days not just one.

The goals are the same as stated above: adequate lean protein, adequate carbohydrates and hydration.

*State Meet* is not the time to try something new. Therefore, use the below tips/suggestions as ideas but incorporate only foods your body is accustomed to.

#### **Tips:**

- ☼ Between event snack ideas – choose foods that digest easily and settle comfortably such as bread, English muffin, bagel, crackers and pasta. **DO NOT OVER EAT THEM!!!**
- ☼ Limit high-fat proteins during the weekend (example – cheese, steak, burgers) they take longer to empty from the stomach.
- ☼ Choose low fat protein sources – they will settle well and keep you from feeling hungry. (example – two or three slices turkey/chicken breast on sandwich, one or two eggs on toast, glass skim or low fat milk with banana and cereal, yogurt with granola.



- ☼ Allow adequate time to digest. High calorie meals take longer to digest. Rule of thumb
  - Allow 3-4hours for a large meal
  - Allow 2-3 hours for a smaller meal
  - Allow 1-2 hours for a blended or liquid meal (smoothie)
  - Allow less than an hour for a small snack (according to your own tolerance).
- ☼ Jittery, nervous swimmer – if you know you cannot eat before events make a special effort to eat well the day before. Have a large bed time snack in lieu of breakfast.
- ☼ If you have a “magic food” you like to have at events, pack it the day before. You may think you won’t forget, but better safe than sorry, put it in the bag the night before or write a note on your bag.
- ☼ Always eat familiar foods before/during competition – don’t try anything new.

**Generic Plan**

State starts July 13, Thursday.

**Tuesday/Wednesday July 11-12:**

HYDRATION: make sure you are consuming extra water minimum of 64oz preferably more if possible. You should be urinating frequently.

FOOD – keep it “normal” No large, heavy, high salted meals (example: no poy boys, French fries, crawfish, fast food) Stick to what we’ve been working on- lean protein, fiber rich carbohydrates, fruits, vegetables, low fat dairy, etc...

**Thursday and every day you have an event:**

HYDRATION: Stay hydrated but don’t drink so much you feel it sloshing around in your stomach. Drink about 24oz of water 2-3hours before your first event and drink throughout the day. Sports drinks are fine, but be sure to drink water as well. FOOD- If you are a breakfast eater, wake up with enough time to eat before your first event. Use the ‘rules of thumb’ above for digestion times. When at the pool your best bet will be snacks between events – banana, sports bars, bagels, crackers, raisins, nuts. If you have a long gap between events ~ 2-3 hours then go for the sandwich or small pasta meal which includes protein.

The break between morning and finals will be the trickiest, you’ll likely be hungry and tired and you have a small window to get it all it. Try and eat right after your last morning event. This meal can be larger as you’ll probably have 3-4hours. Try to control yourself; you will feel much more emotionally drained

than your body truly is physically. Don’t rush through your meal so you know when you are full, this can be a larger meal but not a stuffer!

If dining out is where your food comes from during state, think chicken breast, pork loin, even seafood but broiled/baked NOT FRIED, stay away from heavy cheese or cream dishes. Eating out can also increase your sodium intake, so try to be sure to request lightly seasoned and drink water. Luckily, you have the home pool advantage. Try to save dining out for celebrations after state.

Remember you are a seasoned swimmer and now you’ve improved your nutrition. Do NOT over think this, just be smart.

Monthly challenge:

Teenage Athlete- Help your parents plan what you will eat in this last week before *State*. Also help out with planning foods during *State Meet*.

Parents – Ask and listen to your teenage athletes as to what foods they prefer during meets. Those with younger kids, don’t get too fancy, stick to what you know has worked in the past. Save “treats” for the end of the day or after the meet is over.

***GOOD LUCK!!!***