

## Swimming Nutrition - Kendal Bjella Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist

### **The short answer about swimming nutrition:**

Carbohydrates are fuel for your body to have a good practice and to perform well in meets. Protein is used by your body to rebuild muscle (not a primary fuel source). Fluids to keep your body temperature in balance and keep you performing at your best.

### **Hydration:**

It only takes a 2% drop in hydration to negatively affect your performance in practice or at a meet.

- 2-3 hours before practice drink 20 ounces of fluid
- 10-15 minutes before practice drink 8-10 ounces of fluid
- During practice drink 8-10 ounces every 15 minutes or if you are swimming for 90 minutes you need to drink 48 - 60 ounces of fluid through out the entire practice. If you don't think you can drink this much in a practice, start with half of that amount and each practice try to drink a little more fluid at each practice.
- After practice, every athlete loses different amounts of water. You can either weigh yourself before practice and then again after practice and drink 2 ounces for each pound lost or drink Gatorade or water until your urine returns to a lemonade or clear color.

You need Gatorade if you are working out for longer than 90 minutes or if the temperature is going to be higher than 75 degrees. Since most pool areas are kept warmer than 75 degrees and since the water is usually warmer than 75 degrees most swimmers would benefit from the additional carbohydrates and electrolytes in Gatorade. Powerade is another option. Avoid the "zero" versions. Keep in mind won't DELETE? these versions won't have the carbohydrates that you need.

If you don't like Gatorade try this:

- Drink it before and after practice and drink water during practice
- Drink half of your fluids during practice water and the other half Gatorade

- Dilute the Gatorade with water

**Before practice or before warm up at a meet:**

\*Try the snacks before a practice first before you eat it before a meet

Have a snack or a small meal here are some ideas:

- A banana with peanut butter or other nut butter
- peanut butter and jelly sandwich
- Greek yogurt with berries
- oatmeal with milk and fruit
- apple and peanut butter or another nut butter
- handful of nuts and raisins (2 parts raisins 1 part nuts)
- Pretzels and peanut butter

**After practice:**

Its important to get protein and carbohydrates within 20-30 minutes after finishing a practice here are some snack ideas.

- Smoothie made with fruit, milk, and Greek yogurt
- Low fat or skim chocolate milk (Easiest just pour yourself a glass when you get home from practice)
- Yogurt with berries
- Turkey on wheat bread or wrap with some vegetables

At meets:

You want foods with some protein and some carbohydrates. You want carbohydrates to refuel between events.

- Peanut butter crackers
- Vegetable sticks (any that you like) Cheese sticks (make sure to

keep cold in a lunch box)

- Whole wheat crackers
- Fruits that you enjoy
- Dried fruit and nuts (2 parts fruit and 1 part nuts)
- bagel with cream cheese or peanut butter
- Granola or cereal bar (avoid high fiber bars during meets those take longer to digest and may cause discomfort during a meet)
- 1 cup of cereal (avoid high fiber cereal)

With all of the snacks listed above try eating these when you feel you have time to sit down and have a snack between your events. If you are nervous about eating at meets try eating one snack or pick something you can munch on through out the whole meet rather than something that will make you feel too full after eating it.

Also remember you want to eat as much as you would if you weren't at a meet. If the meet goes over breakfast and lunch-time you need to eat as many calories as you would eating a breakfast and a lunch. Pick high calorie small snacks that way you can get lots of calories without feeling "stuffed" and not able to swim.

Here are the sources I used for my nutrition talk and this hand out. If you have any questions don't hesitate to stop me after practice and ask me questions!

- [eatright.org](http://eatright.org)
- Sports Nutrition: A Practice Manual for Professionals
- Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Dietitians of Canada, and the American College of Sports Medicine: Nutrition and Athletic Performance
- Gatorade Sports Science institute website [gssiweb.org](http://gssiweb.org)