

WHAT SHOULD I EAT DURING A SWIM MEET?

Take-Away Points:

- Meet fuel should consist of easily digestible carbohydrates, real unprocessed food as much as possible
- Eat/drink your meet fuel in small nibbles and swigs spread out throughout the meet session.
- Practice good nutrition habits everyday, every meal. Your body counts on energy stored from the meals that you eat leading up to race day to provide the energy on race day.

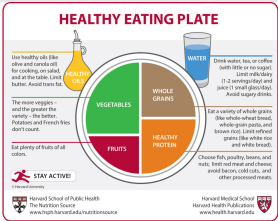
The purpose for taking in fuel during a meet is to top-off energy stores. Swimmers should not rely on meet fuel for the main source of their racing energy. Most of the energy a swimmer burns during racing comes from energy stored in the muscles from the meals the swimmer eats in the days leading up to the meet. Fuel eaten during the meet simply replenishes those energy stores and enables muscle and tissue recovery for the next event, the next session, the next day of racing.

Meet fuel should be primarily easily digestible carbohydrates (energy), limited protein and no fat. The body efficiently converts carbohydrates to energy, but digestion of protein and fat siphons oxygen and energy away from working muscles.

Guidelines For Meet Fuel:

- **Size of a Snack** – the amount of fuel a swimmer needs during one session of a meet is no more than the size of a small snack.
- **Mostly Carbohydrates**, a little protein is ok, avoid fat; eat real food (unprocessed) as much as possible!
- **Variety** – pack a variety of fuels to stay satiated
- **Nibbles and Sips** - Take in fuel in small amounts at a time. Too much food in the stomach will draw energy- and oxygen-rich blood away from the muscles towards digestion.
- **Timing Your Fuel** – Plan a bite/swig of fuel immediately after each event to top-off fuel stores and aid in recovery
- **STAY HYDRATED!** – drink a bottle of water during each session of a meet

Examples of Meet Fuel:

< 1 hour between events	2-3 hours between events	4 or more hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Easily digestible carbohydrates</u> • Fruit – banana, berries, watermelon, cantaloupe, apple... • Fruit puree • Diluted sports drink • WATER! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Solid carbohydrates</u> • Cereal + fruit • ½ bagel + fruit • ½ bar + fruit • Pretzels + fruit • Stave off hunger with a bite of protein – yogurt, lowfat cheese, hard boiled egg • WATER! 	<p><u>My Healthy Plate</u></p>  <p>The infographic 'HEALTHY EATING PLATE' features a central circular plate divided into four quadrants: Vegetables (green), Whole Grains (brown), Fruits (red), and Healthy Protein (orange). To the left is a glass of orange juice labeled 'SOUTH COAST' and to the right is a glass of water labeled 'WATER'. Surrounding the plate are several text boxes providing dietary advice: 'Use healthy oils like olive and avocado oil...'; 'The more vegetables and the greater the variety...'; 'Eat a variety of whole grains...'; 'Choose fish, poultry, beans, and nuts...'; and 'STAY ACTIVE'. Logos for the Harvard School of Public Health and the Nutrition Council are at the bottom.</p>