

A Better Choice

Healthy options made easy



Healthy eating for carnivals and competition events

No time is more important to ensure players are fuelling right than at state or regional carnivals, and competition events.

Drinks



Food



Before the event, 2 - 3 hours

Junior athletes need **1.2–1.9 Litres of fluid** a day and more when playing sport.

Adult athletes need around **2–2.5 Litres of fluid** a day and more when playing sport.

Tips for hydrating before play:

- Sip regularly on water throughout the day.
- Increase fluid intake with water and plain milk.
- Skip unnecessary sugary drinks, energy drinks, or sports drinks.
- Hydrating in the days before an event can slow down dehydration during play.

If you have time before the event:

Eat a small meal containing breads and cereals, fruit, and vegetables
2 to 3 hours before play.

Such as:

- Breakfast cereal with milk, yoghurt, and fruit
- Baked beans or tinned spaghetti on toast
- Rolls, sandwiches, wraps with your favourite fillings
- Baked potato with fillings
- Rice or noodle-based dishes

Before the event, 1.5 - 2 hours

For events early in the morning or when you have less time before the event:

Choose low fibre carbohydrates
1.5 to 2 hours before play.

Such as:

- Crackers and cheese
- Fruit or small fruit smoothie
- Reduced fat yoghurt or custard
- Pikelets with fruit
- Plain, non-iced fruit bun or fruit bread
- Small bowl of cereal with fruit, milk and/or yoghurt

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During the event, 0 - 1 hour

Always have a water bottle on hand to sip from at drink breaks.

Exercise **under 90 minutes** generally does not warrant sports drinks.

Extra fuel during play to boost energy levels is generally **not needed for 1 hour or less**.

Snack on fruit, if needed.

During the event, 1 – 1.5 hours

It is important to stay hydrated and not wait until thirst kicks in to drink water.

If exercise is **high intensity for greater than 90 minutes** sports drinks can provide energy to support performance for an event.

If exercise is **longer than 60 to 90 minutes**, it can be beneficial to **top-up with some extra carbohydrates** to help maintain energy levels.

Fruit, muesli bars, fruit buns or simple sandwiches can be good options.

After the event, within 1 hour

Water is best to replace fluids lost during play. Skip unnecessary sugary drinks, energy drinks, or sports drinks.

Other great options include,

- **Fruits and vegetables**, such as watermelon, oranges, banana and vegetable sticks.
- **Milk.**

Refuel with a nutritious meal that contains carbohydrates and protein such as fruit smoothie, lean beef or lentil bolognese, or a simple chicken and salad sandwich.

Have a diet rich in the **five food groups*** to assist recovery in the days following the event.

*Australia Guide to Healthy Eating, The Five Food Groups. www.eatforhealth.gov.au/food-essentials/five-food-groups.

Sources:

1- National Health and Medical Research Council. [Nutrient Reference Values for Australia and New Zealand: Water](#). 2006.

2- Sports Dietitians Australia. [Resource Hub, Factsheets: Across the Lifespan, Fuelling & Recovering](#).