

Race Day Nutrition Recommendations for Youth and Junior Athletes

Race season is here, and it's time to think about your athlete's race day nutrition plan. Following are my general recommendations for different ages and distances - please keep in mind, this is *general*, meaning it might not be perfect for your athlete. It's a good starting place to build on.

Race ages 6-10 (100y swim/3 mile bike/0.5 mile run):

- Night before: Light dinner, low on grease/unhealthy fats, low fiber, something you know will digest well for your athlete. Make sure they are well hydrated throughout the day before!
- Race day breakfast: 1.5-2 hours before race start, 200-400 calories - primarily carbohydrates, low fiber, with 8-16 ounces of water.
- Pre-race: Hydrate (put a Nuun or similar in their water if it is a hot day), and have a last 50-100 calorie simple carbohydrate snack IF they are hungry leading up to the race.
- During the race: No calories, can have a water bottle in transition and/or take water from aid stations on the run.
- Post-race: Eat 200-300 calories (primarily carbohydrate - healthy ones!) and drink 8-16 ounces of water within 30 minutes of finishing.

Race ages 11-15 (200y swim/6 mile bike/1 mile run):

- Night before: Light dinner, low on grease/unhealthy fats, low fiber, something you know will digest well for your athlete. Make sure they are well hydrated throughout the day before!
- Race day breakfast: 1.5-2 hours before race start, 300-500 calories - primarily carbohydrates, low fiber, with 8-16 ounces of water.
- Pre-race: Hydrate (put a Nuun or similar in their water if it is a hot day), and have a last 50-100 calorie simple carbohydrate snack IF they are hungry leading up to the race.
- During the race: No calories, can have a water bottle in transition and/or take water from aid stations on the run.
- Post-race: Eat 200-400 calories (primarily carbohydrate - healthy ones!) and drink 8-16 ounces of water within 30 minutes of finishing.

Race ages 12-16 (375m swim/6 mile bike/1.5 mile run):

- Night before: Light dinner, low on grease/unhealthy fats, low fiber, something you know will digest well for your athlete. Make sure they are well hydrated throughout the day before!
- Race day breakfast: 1.5-2 hours before race start, 300-500 calories - primarily carbohydrates, low fiber, with 8-16 ounces of water.
- Pre-race: Hydrate (put a Nuun or similar in their water if it is a hot day), and have a last 50-100 calorie simple carbohydrate snack IF they are hungry leading up to the race.
- During the race: No calories, can have a water bottle on the bike (likely does not need to be full) with Nuun or similar (if the day is hot), and/or take water from aid stations on the run.
- Post-race: Eat 200-500 calories (primarily carbohydrate - healthy ones!) and drink 8-16 ounces of water within 30 minutes of finishing.

Race ages 16-19 (750m swim/12 mile bike/5K run):

- Night before: Light dinner, low on grease/unhealthy fats, low fiber, something you know will digest well for your athlete. Make sure they are well hydrated throughout the day before!
- Race day breakfast: 1.5-2 hours before race start, 300-500 calories - primarily carbohydrates, low fiber, with 8-16 ounces of water.
- Pre-race: Hydrate (put a Nuun or similar in their water if it is a hot day), and have a last 100 calorie simple carbohydrate snack (gel or similar) with water 15 minutes before race start.
- During the race: Training races should always have a gel or similar (basically 100 calories of simple carbs) towards the end of the bike. A races usually should have no calories during the race, though the athlete should take water on the bike (with Nuun or similar if it's a warm day)
- Post-race: Eat 200-500 calories (primarily carbohydrate - healthy ones!) and drink 8-16 ounces of water within 30 minutes of finishing.

Please let your head coach know if you have any questions!