

CCB Swordfish Nutrition Fast Facts to Remember

- Consuming excess protein will not build muscle faster. A normal diet gives you plenty of protein.
- Energy for specific events is provided by foods eaten several days before competition, not in the minutes just before the race.
- Drinking adequate water is vital to nutrition and performance. This is especially so in hot, humid environments.
- Pre-competition meals should be low in fat and high in carbohydrates.
- Most fast-food menus provide the exact opposite of the above.
- Foods that are mainly carbohydrates take the least time to digest and leave the stomach, making them ideal pre-competition choices

Suggestions for Eating to Win

■ Lots of Carbohydrates

Swimmers get most of their energy from their bodies breaking down food that is rich in carbs. A carbohydrate is like a wick on a candle. It burns slowly for long lasting energy to give you the power to perform at long meets or practices. You should eat as much as possible daily, but always eat a lot more a week before a meet. Don't wait until the night or day before the meet.

Examples: potatoes, pizza, pasta, pancakes, bread and cereal.

■ Have protein every day

Protein is important to a swimmer's body to build all the cells, especially muscle cells. As a swimmer's muscles grow, cells are built and having protein in a meal makes those cells stronger.

Examples: chicken, turkey, milk

■ Fats are important, but don't over do them!

Fats are used by the body for energy. The difference between them and carbohydrates is that they take a lot longer to be broken down for energy, so they sit there and end up making swimmers get fat. **Remember, fat gets in fast when you're hungry, but takes its time leaving!** Fat is also very heavy. If you feel heavy you swim slower and it makes it harder to sprint.

■ Drink a lot of water

Make sure to drink **at least 8 glasses of water a day!** It is also very important to keep your body full of fluids while you work out. So bring a water bottle to practice and drink before, during, and after practice. You do sweat while you swim! Sports drinks are also good at any time, but don't stop drinking water.

■ Vitamins and minerals are important

A good balanced diet should always include lots of fruits and vegetables. They are loaded with the power of vitamins and minerals that add extra energy the body needs to perform at its best. Milk also has lots of vitamins and minerals the body uses to build strength so you can last through that 400 IM. 😊

■ Eat light snacks at swim meets

When you have long waiting periods before you swim or just feel hungry, it's good to have nutritious snacks. Examples: 1/2 of a bagel, a small box of dry cereal, fruit (apples or oranges are great), granola or a light power bar are good choices. It is not a good idea to eat too close to your race, so give yourself time to digest the food. Sports drinks (watered down) and water are great if you are thirsty.

When at a meet, keep in mind that the more food in your stomach, the more blood that has to go there to digest it. If blood and oxygen are going there, then there's less going to the muscles to make them work.

AVOID SODA AND CANDY! It is a quick sugar high that only makes you feel tired when it wears off. It is the sugar that gives you all the energy, but it doesn't last too long.

The Pre-Event Meal

- Eat this meal about 2-3 hours before warm-up.
- The meal does not have to be large, but should fill you up for the next few hours.
- High-carbohydrate foods are the best options: e.g., bread, cereals, fruit, pasta, rice, etc.
- Ensure that the meal is **low fat**, this speeds up digestion.
- Eat breakfast before you get to the pool, leaving time for the carbo fuel to get in!
- Have a drink to optimize hydration: try sports drink, juice, or best of all, WATER!
- **Avoid the caffeine in cola drinks, coffee, chocolate, and tea - it is dehydrating.**

Recovery After a Hard Day's Competition

- Have something to drink and eat immediately after your last swim.
- Avoid the "fast food" chains on the way home - their high fat foods will delay recovery.
- Have some high-carbo food prepared so you can eat as soon as you arrive home.
- The worst thing you can do is wait a couple of hours, then stop at McDonald's or KFC and fill up on whatever they're serving very low in carbohydrates, and much too high in fat and salt!

Top Snacks Between Events (1-2 hour breaks)

- Snack fruits (small cans of fruit) or canned baby fruits.
- Bananas.
- Fruit that is peeled and cut up (easier to eat this way).
- Plain bread rolls (white bread may be less heavy) - try pita bread!
- Fruit buns or raisin bread.
- Rice cakes (you can top them with honey, jam, or banana).
- Rice pudding or bread pudding (use reduced-fat milk).
- Instant noodles (varieties that do not contain oil or the flavor packet).
- Jam or honey sandwiches (NOT with peanut butter)
- Plain boiled pasta with a little tomato sauce.
- Low-fat breakfast or plain (non-chocolate-covered granola bar)
- Plain crackers (not high-fat types).
- Low-fat puddings or jello.
- Small amount of reduced-fat yogurts.
- PowerGel (or imitations)
- PowerBars (or imitations)

Longer Breaks or After the Competition

- Sandwiches with low-fat fillings (avoid butter and tuna- or egg- "salad" as the "salad" is mostly high-fat mayonnaise).
- Pasta or rice with tomato pasta sauce (a little chicken or very lean meat in sauce is okay).
- Probably the most important thing to remember is that while you need to eat some food, ***you will swim better being a little hungry than a little full.*** So drink lots, eat a little, and you should be well on your way to swimming success.