

NUTRITION FOR VOLLEYBALL PLAYERS

Leslie Bonci is a world-renown Sports Dietician from the University of Pittsburgh, who has graciously shared some of her "Sports Specific Nutrition Guidelines for Volleyball."

** This information is intended for use by the players of Michigan Elite Volleyball Academy (MEVBA). Use of this information by other clubs, companies or private entities without written consent by the author is strictly prohibited. **

Guideline #1: FLUIDS

- 1) You need to get enough fluid into your system every day. Your daily fluid intake should be 90 ounces (that's 11 cups or 4.5 water bottles). ALL fluids count with the exception of alcohol.
- 2) You should consume 20 ounces of fluid 60 minutes before a practice, workout or match, and should take in an additional 5-10 ounces of fluid every 15-20 minutes during the exercise session. TAKE GULPS, NOT SIPS!
- 3) Weigh yourself to track fluid loss: you should consume 24 ounces of fluid after exercise for every pound you lose during exercise.
- 4) Limit caffeine consumption to <2 cups per day, regardless of the form. This includes herbal forms of caffeine like mate, guarana and kola nut.
- 5) Try to avoid juices, energy drinks and carbonated drinks before practices and games.
- 6) Some foods should be considered fluids, including soup, fruit ices, popsicles and gelatin.

So remember:

20 ounces of water or sports drink 60 minutes before exercise.

5-10 ounces of fluids every 15-20 minutes during exercise.

- Alternate water and a sports drink
- Gulps work better than sips

After exercise you should replace what you lost, 24 ounces per pound of weight loss

- Rehydrate with water, sports drinks, lemonade, chocolate milk
- Don't rehydrate with carbonated drinks
- Cool/cold fluids absorb best

Guideline #2: FOOD

- 1) You need to eat enough TIMES per day: ideally you should eat every 3-4 hours

- 2) You need to eat breakfast... EVERY DAY! You need to eat something within one hour of waking up, otherwise your body will have to play catch-up all day long. That means tired minds in class and tired bodies and minds at practice.
- 3) If you are not going to eat a meal at lunch, substitute with a sports bar, peanut butter crackers, a mix of cereal and nuts, or a piece of cheese and fruit... YOU NEED TO EAT SOMETHING!

CARBOHYDRATES

- 1) CARBS ARE NOT THE ENEMY! Eating enough carbohydrate containing foods is ESSENTIAL for optimal performance.
- 2) Carbohydrate sources include (in alphabetical order): bagels, bread, cereal, fruit, juice, noodles, pasta, potatoes, rice, rolls and sports drinks.
- 3) Carbohydrates should be consumed before, during and after practices/matches
 - Pre-game meal should be ideally consumed 3 HOURS before a game and should be 2/3 carbohydrate
 - 5-10 minutes before a match, try 6-8 ounces of a sports drink
 - During a practice or match: sports drink (provides fluids and carbs), sports gel or gelatin
 - Post-match (or practice): you should eat something within 15 MINUTES, this is the optimal time to efficiently replenish your energy stores. Try a handful of sweetened cereal, 1/2 a bagel, 1 Pop-Tart, 2 granola bars, a small handful of pretzels, Chex Mix or crackers or 1/2 a sports bar

PROTEINS

- 1) Protein is needed every day to help develop strong muscles and bones, and to boost the immune system.
- 2) Some source of protein should be consumed in every meal/snack.
- 3) Protein sources include (in alphabetical order): cheese, chicken, dried beans, eggs, fish, hamburger, lamb, milk, nuts, peanut butter, pork, pumpkin seeds, soy products, sports bars with protein (Gatorade Bar, Power Bar), steak, sunflower seeds, turkey, veal, venison, yogurt.

FATS

- 1) Try to limit fat intake prior to practice/matches as fats tend to rest heavy in the stomach and may cause cramping.
- 2) Fat intake should also be avoided between matches in a tournament situation.
- 3) Fat sources include (in alphabetical order): bacon, cheeseburgers, chips, french fries, fried meats, onion rings, pepperoni, sausage.

Guideline #3: PRE-MATCH MEALS

- 1) Ideally should be consumed 3 hours before a match (or practice).
- 2) If time is more limited, such as due to an early morning match, the athlete should still eat a balanced meal, 2/3 carbohydrate, low fat, but a smaller volume.
- 3) 5-10 minutes before the match, try 6-8 ounces of a sports drink or a handful of cereal.
- 4) Examples of pre-match meals include:
 - Pasta with sauce, bread and a salad
 - Stir fry with meat and vegetables over rice
 - Thick crust pizza with cheese and vegetables (no pepperoni or sausage)
 - Scrambled eggs and a bagel
 - Turkey sub
 - Bagel sandwich (with lean meat or peanut butter and jelly)

Guideline #4: ALL-DAY TOURNAMENTS

- 1) Eat a good pre-match meal as noted above.
- 2) Eat small amounts at timeouts or change overs between sets when able; make sure to eat a small amount between matches if you play back-to-back.
- 3) If you have a break between matches, make sure you replenish within 15 minutes of the end of the first match.
- 4) Good food choices to have with you at all-day tournaments include:
 - Energy bars
 - Energy gels
 - Dried fruit
 - Granola bars
 - Yogurt
 - Crackers
 - Peanut butter sandwich
 - Peanut butter crackers
 - Cereal
 - Trail mix (nuts, seeds, dried fruit)
 - Gelatin
 - Fruit smoothies

If you have specific questions for Leslie Bonci, you can contact her by email at boncilj@upmc.edu. You can also follow Leslie on Twitter at [@lesliebonci](https://twitter.com/lesliebonci).