



## Touch Footy

July 2009

### About Touch Footy

Touch Football is a sport played widely in Australia, both recreationally and competitively. The game is played in two twenty-minute halves with a ten-minute interval with competitions running all year round. Touch football tournaments may require players to have up to three to four games in the one day.

The game requires continuous running with short bursts of sprinting as well as agility, quick handling of the ball and knowledge of tactical moves. Player substitutions are allowed and encouraged throughout the game.

### Training diet

During seasonal competitions, games are played at least once a week, with a couple of training sessions per week. Therefore refuelling of fluid and carbohydrate is essential to be optimally prepared to maximise performance. The training diet should be a balanced diet, rich in carbohydrates and low in fat and includes plenty of fluids.

### Fluid Needs

The fluid needs of players during training and games are generally high because of the "stop and go" style of the game and the nature of multiple games on competition days. Dehydration negatively affects exercise ability, skill execution and decision making and thus can significantly affect performance. Starting the game well hydrated is a must but here (above right) are some other tips to stay hydrated during a game...

- During the game, use the opportunities for fluid replacement during substitutions and half time intervals.
- In most games water would be an appropriate fluid choice. However, a flavoured drink with a small amount of electrolytes such as a sports drink may encourage greater overall fluid consumption. If playing multiple games in a day, sports drinks provide valuable carbohydrate to improve performance and delay fatigue.
- Rehydration strategies should be practiced during training sessions to allow players to familiarize themselves with the regime.
- During summer competitions, fluid losses are greater and deserve extra attention.

### What should I eat pre-event?

The pre-game meal should be eaten **3-4 hours prior to play**. It should be high in carbohydrate and low in fat. To avoid stomach upset, foods low in fibre and fat may be preferred. It is important to ensure the meal is well planned and uses familiar foods and fluids. (See below)

**3-4 hrs before:** Bowl of cereal + low fat milk  
+ 400ml fruit juice

**2 hrs before:** Jam sandwich

**1 hr before:** 300 ml sports drink

Athletes need to practice eating pre-game meals and snacks before heavy training to work out what they can tolerate. And if they suffer from pre-game nerves or can't compete with a full stomach, nutritious drinks (e.g. smoothies) or eating early can help. Top up with small snacks or drinks closer to the game.

Aim to follow up the pre-event meal with high-carbohydrate, low-fat snacks leading up to a match, such as a jam sandwich, muesli bar or fruit to top up fuel stores before the match.

Some other pre-game meal ideas include:

- Tinned spaghetti on toast
- Baked potato with salsa and low fat mayonnaise
- Fruit salad and low fat fruit yoghurt
- Sandwich/roll with honey
- Rice cakes/crumpets with jam

If playing multiple games in one day, you will need to plan to eat between games. But athletes should not rely on the venue to have good choices available! Go to the ground prepared with snacks for in between matches.

## What should I eat/drink during competition?

As the game lasts less than an hour, eating in the half-time break is not necessary. If the training diet and pre-event meal are rich in carbohydrates, this is enough to sustain the player throughout the game. Hydration, however, is the main priority during a game.

At half time, aim for 200-400mls of fluid and sip from a drink bottle during breaks in play and on the interchange bench. (Don't spit it out!). Sports drinks during the game would be beneficial to encourage fluid, carbohydrate and electrolyte replacement and water should be provided at all times on the sidelines.

In hot conditions, pay extra attention to fluid needs by having plenty of cool, refreshing fluids on hand, drinking at every opportunity (e.g. during breaks and when coming off the field) and monitoring and replacing losses aggressively after a match/training session.

## What about recovery?

Recovery after a game is very important especially if there are upcoming games in the same day.

Examples of good recovery foods include:

- A salad sandwich or banana roll
- A bowl of cereal with milk
- Cereal/muesli bars
- Fruit salad and yoghurt
- English muffins/fruit muffins
- Soup + bread roll

These foods are ideal for recovery between games.

## Other Nutrition Tips

- Keep breakfast bars and jelly beans handy in your training bag for a quick energy boost, especially if playing multiple games in a day.
- Players need to **be prepared** to take their own food to the competition venue, especially during tournament play, as appropriate choices may not be available at the venue.
- Encourage players to always carry a water bottle with them and keep it filled with water or sports drink to remind themselves to stay hydrated.

## How do I get involved?

Call your local touch association or click on the link below to find out more information and get involved.

<http://www.austouch.com.au/>

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