

Fueling Swimmers

"USA Swimming recently launched a new campaign called #swimFASTERfood....The focus of the campaign is on "what to eat at a meet," to prepare for performance on race day. We believe athletes may have treats and try many foods as part of healthy, well-balanced diet. So, donuts, hot dogs and nachos aren't "off the table" so to speak, but we have other options for swimmers to consider on the day of a swim meet... to be the main source of fuel at a meet that the swimmers have trained so hard for." (*What to Eat at a Meet: A #swimFASTERfood Q&A with our Nutrition Expert, Kelly Jones, RD August 9, 2017*)

Snacks that Help You SWIM! (protein based foods paired with complex carbs)

Bottled Water -- The human body is about 60% water. Always keep your reservoir replenished.

Low-Fat Milk -- You can't have a strong swimmer without strong bones.

Greek Yogurt -- 10 grams of protein in a cup to get you through the last leg of the 200 IM!

Nuts -- With about 20% protein in a 1/4 cup, any swimmer would be nuts not to snack on nuts.

Bananas & Dried Fruit -- Rich in vitamins, fiber and energy

Whole-Grain Granola Bars -- Skip the sugar and dive into slow burning energy.

Carrot Dippers -- Low in sugar. High in flavor. Try pairing these with wheat pitas and hummus a couple hours before a race or practice.

Instant Oatmeal -- An instant snack for sustained energy.

Apple Chips -- If you feel like chips, go apple, not fried potato chips.

Tuna Packets -- Eat tuna and swim like a fish.

String Cheese -- Not many carbs. Just a long line of energy.

Fig Bars -- With almost no fat, it's the smart swimmer's candy bar.

Applesauce Packs -- It's the secret sauce for swimming success.

Hardboiled Eggs -- All the protein you need to egg yourself on.

Trail Mix -- With about 15% protein in a 1/4 cup, trail mix is a great post-race option.

(*It's Time for "Swim" Snacking, USA Swimming, June 20, 2017*)

Other SwimFASTER Snack Ideas include:

Whole Grain and Plain Bagels, Spreads (such as Peanut/Almond Butter, Honey, Fruit Spread), Seasonal Fruit (berries, apples, oranges, grapes etc), Fruit Smoothies, Lean Beef/Turkey Jerky, Hummus cups with Pita Bread or Whole Grain Crackers, Pretzels

"Sink" Snacks (snacks that are low in nutrients and high in fat)

Why: Fat is important for the body, but the type in junk food sits in your stomach, keeping energy from getting to your muscles. This leaves you sluggish and maybe with a belly ache.

Examples of "Sink Snacks"

Potato Chips – Made of mostly fat, eating chips before a race may make you feel sick, not quick

Candy Bars – After the sugar high, they're more like sugar crash and burn bars.

Donuts – When you try fuel with fried food, you'll only hope to make it from flip turn to finish.

(*No More "Sink" Snacking, USA Swimming, June 20, 2017*)

Be careful of "energy" drinks. Most of them are not appropriate for fueling physical activity. Be sure to avoid caffeinated beverages before, during and after exercise; they can hinder your performance and post-hydrating efforts.

Time before competition	Recommended Food/Liquid
½ - 1 hour	Liquids (sports drinks and water)
1 to 2 hours	Small snack and liquids
2 to 3 hours	Small meal and liquids
3 to 4 hours	Regular size meal and liquids

(*The Athlete's Guide to Peak Performance, Hy-Vee*)

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