



Natasha's Top-Ten Nutrition Tips

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Well, kudos to you! You're about to take part in an amazing adventure for a great cause! Of course, nutrition is an important aspect of your preparation. You need to establish good eating habits in preparation for your training sessions and for the Tour of Hope. I see it too often: athletes don't refuel often enough. It's also a good idea to use your training sessions to figure out what works and what doesn't for you. For example, what's easier for you to digest? How often do you need to snack to maintain your energy level? So here it is: my Top-Ten Nutrition Tips.

1. Time large meals properly

Heavy meals should be consumed 3-4 hours prior to long rides for sufficient digestion time. With less than 3h, adapt meal choices.

2. Hydrate for power

Thirst and dark urine are signs of dehydration. Dehydration can reduce power output by 4-30%. It takes 4-24 hours to rehydrate and it is possible to overhydrate. Amount of liquid needed during rides depends on individual sweat rates. As a general rule, assure pale 1st morning urine and sip liquid regularly through the day.



3. Carbs are your friends

If lacking carbs, the body attempts to use protein (muscle) as an energy source, which brings about fatigue (17% reduction in speed), reduced endurance capacity & risk of muscle loss. Consume the right amounts for your body & training.

4. Eating too much fat and fibre, in the hour prior to a ride, can make you sluggish

Large amounts of fat, found in regular salad dressing, handfuls of nuts, chips or restaurant pizza should be limited in the hour before rides. The same goes for all-bran/fibre 1 cereal, hummus & bean chili. This is because large amounts of fat and fibre slow digestion and the speed at which energy (fuel) can get to the muscles and brain.

5. Food combinations are crucial to success

Meals should be made up of grains for fuel, protein for muscle building, vegetables/fruit for antioxidants and liquids.

6. Snacking is not just for kids

It is important to always consume a snack if there is more than 3 hours between meals. Snacks must contain carbohydrates (fruit or grain) and protein. The combination is important for sustainability.



7. Fuel your longer rides

The general rule of thumb for rides lasting 1.5-2.5 hours is 30-60g carbs hourly. For rides lasting 3 hours or more, consume 60-90g carbs hourly.

8. Don't forget the salt!

Especially if you sweat a lot and are prone to muscle cramps & headaches, replace sodium lost in sweat with the use of sports drinks. Not all sports drinks are created equally.

9. Don't eat the same way every day!

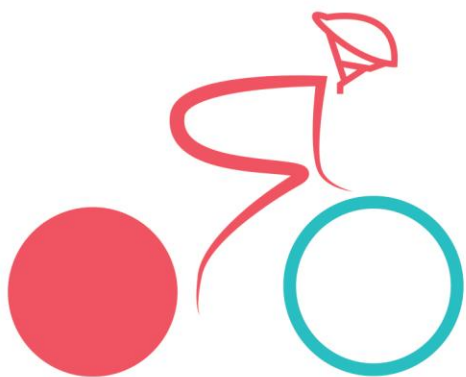
Proportions change (periodization) based on how heavy the training week is. You should not eat the same way on a day of a short ride, a long ride or a recovery day. Carb-loading can be necessary.

10. Recovery starts right away

The purpose of the recovery food is to start repairing damaged muscle tissue and to refuel within 30-60 minutes after a ride. Amounts of carbs, protein and liquid depend on personal sweat rates, weight, goals, intensity of ride, length of ride & physical fitness levels of each cyclist. Examples include:

- Greek yogurt, juice box, granola, fruit
- Chocolate milk
- Balanced meal + water

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