



Schools' Head of the River Regatta

Sponsored by UniSA

Nutrition Fact Sheet

The Schools' Head of the River Regatta Sponsored by UniSA is held annually at the Alex Ramsay Regatta Course, West Lakes. Here are some tips on what you should be eating and drinking whilst training, competing and recovering.



What foods should I be eating whilst in the training phase for Head of the River Rowing?

It's important for you to maintain daily carbohydrate (CHO) requirements and ensure you're consuming a CHO-containing food at every meal. There are many foods containing CHO, but your best option is to select those that also contain additional nutrients. This will help keep your growing body at optimal health.

Some options you may want to consider:

Breakfast: cereals, toast, milk, fruit, yoghurt

Lunch and Dinner: bread, pasta, rice, potatoes, home-made pizza, fruit

Snacks: fruit, plain muffins, crispbreads, cereal, milk, yoghurt

Try to stay away from CHO foods such as lollies, cordial, sweet biscuits, cakes and soft drinks as they don't provide any additional nutrients. Check out the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating's website eatforhealth.gov.au that will list your requirements, including CHO intakes, depending on age and gender.

What should I be eating the night before and on the day of the competition?

Both meals should be high in CHO, if possible. If you feel nauseous prior to competition try CHO rich drinks.

On the day of the competition, what should I be drinking?

For your age group and length of competition, it's recommended that you drink to your thirst and then an additional ½-1 cup above that. Make sure you begin the competition well hydrated by ensuring you drink approximately 500ml of water in the 2hrs prior.

You may consider making drinks more palatable, for example, think about their temperature and flavour – you may like to keep them really cool and perhaps add a hint of sugar free cordial. The use of energy and sports drinks are generally reserved for activities of longer duration (generally over 90 mins), so won't provide any competitive or health advantages in this instance.

How important is it to keep hydrated during the event?

Staying hydrated is important for optimal sports performance. As little as 2% body weight loss can impair exercise performance, and at 5% body weight loss exercise performance is seriously impaired and leads to a decreased capacity for work by about 30%.

What should I be eating and drinking to help recovery after competition?

The most important thing is to make sure you drink to your thirst and a little bit extra as indicated above. If your competition has not run longer than 60-90 minutes you do not need to worry about replacing lost CHO. If you feel hungry the best thing to consume would be some nice cool fruit.

Fact sheet content supplied by a Lecturer in Nutrition from UniSA.