

# Food for thought

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They won't be able to train as hard or as long, so won't improve their play, and during games run the risk of getting tired.

How they perform during games and training depends on what they eat and drink before, during and after each match or session. If they eat and drink the right stuff, they will improve. Follow our advice and they'll be a bundle of energy out on the pitch!

First off, let's look at the essential nutrients young footballers need to be eating, and the foods they're found in.

## **Nutrient found in**

- Simple carbohydrates: Sweets, cakes, soft drinks, jam
- Complex carbohydrates: Rice, bread, pasta, potatoes, cereals, fruit
- Saturated fats: Butter, margarine, cheese, pasties
- Unsaturated fats: Sunflower oil, salmon, nuts
- Protein: Milk, chicken, eggs, fish, yoghurt
- Vitamins and minerals: Fruit, vegetables, dairy products
- Fibre: Seeds, peas, beans
- Water: Foods, drinks, formulated sports drinks

Footballers need increased energy to gain that extra edge, and that's most commonly found in carbohydrate. Now, in a healthy diet, 55-60% of it should come from carbohydrate, but for footballers, it's even higher - as much as 70%!

Of course, players need other nutrients too and it's not easy to get the perfect intake of carbohydrate from eating a regular three meals a day. The way to do it is by snacking - snacks play a crucial role in a player's diet, especially if eaten immediately after training or a match. That's when the energy stores in the muscles which have just been working are best refuelled.

## **Snack Attack! These snacks are high in carbohydrate but low in fat**

- Banana, jam or honey sandwiches
- Muesli bars or sweetened popcorn
- Fruit cake, currant buns, scones, American muffins
- Crumpets, bagels, English muffins, scotch pancakes
- Pop Tarts, rusks and cereal
- Jelly cubes
- Jaffa cakes, wine gums, jelly babies
- Low fat rice pudding, bread pudding
- Yoghurts and milkshakes
- Fruit and dried fruit