



Healthy Carnivals and Events

No time is more important to ensure players are fuelling right than at state or regional carnivals, and competition events.

Whether food is provided by an external caterer hired by the club or association, provided by the canteen or volunteers at the club or association, or brought by players themselves it is important to offer healthy food and drinks to ensure players and their families are fuelling right.

Healthy self-catering tips

When the club or association is providing the food and drink options to players during a carnival or event follow these tips,

- Focus on providing carbohydrate and protein rich food such as, fresh fruit and vegetables, toasties, cereal, milk, yoghurt, muesli bars and fruit buns. Ensure these are easy to grab.
- Limit any high fat foods such as, bacon, sausages, chips, chocolate or biscuits and keep them in shorter supply.

Tips for catering hire

When an external caterer is supplying the food and drinks at an event or carnival, ensuring healthy options are accessible and encouraged can be as simple as inserting a requirement based on the A Better Choice Food and Drink targets in the contract or agreement¹. Such as:

- Provide 50% or more food and drinks from the green category.
- Provide 20% or less of food and drinks from the red category.
- Provide no more than 20% intense artificially or naturally sweetened drinks.

Advice for players when bringing food from home

Promote healthy eating by distributing education resources to players and members that highlight the importance of consuming healthy options before, during and after exercise to fuel the body effectively and boost performance.

Help your players use the best fuel to boost their performance!



Fuelling up with fresh fruit

¹ See page 4-12 from the [A Better Choice Strategy for Sport and Recreation](#).

Find a 'Healthy Eating for Events' guide below.

For more on A Better Choice for Sport and Recreation in Queensland, visit hw.qld.gov.au/a-better-choice/

A Better Choice

Healthy options made easy

Healthy eating for carnivals and competition events

Drinks



Food



Before the event, 2 - 3 hours

Junior athletes need **1.2–1.9 Litres of fluid** a day and more when playing sport.

Adult athletes need around **2–2.5 Litres of fluid** a day and more when playing sport.

Tips for hydrating before play:

- Sip regularly on water throughout the day.
- Increase fluid intake with water and plain milk.
- Skip unnecessary sugary drinks, energy drinks, or sports drinks.
- Hydrating in the days before an event can slow down dehydration during play.

If you have time before the event:

Eat a small meal containing breads and cereals, fruit, and vegetables
2 to 3 hours before play.

Such as:

- Breakfast cereal with milk, yoghurt, and fruit
- Baked beans or tinned spaghetti on toast
- Rolls, sandwiches, wraps with your favourite fillings
- Baked potato with fillings
- Rice or noodle-based dishes

Before the event, 1.5 - 2 hours

For events early in the morning or when you have less time before the event:

Choose low fibre carbohydrates
1.5 to 2 hours before play.

Such as:

- Crackers and cheese
- Fruit or small fruit smoothie
- Reduced fat yoghurt or custard
- Pikelets with fruit
- Plain, non-iced fruit bun or fruit bread
- Small bowl of cereal with fruit, milk and/or yoghurt

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During the event, 0 - 1 hour

Always have a water bottle on hand to sip from at drink breaks.

Exercise **under 90 minutes** generally does not warrant sports drinks.

Extra fuel during play to boost energy levels is generally **not needed for 1 hour or less**.

Snack on fruit, if needed.

During the event, 1 – 1.5 hours

It is important to stay hydrated and not wait until thirst kicks in to drink water.

If exercise is **high intensity for greater than 90 minutes** sports drinks can provide energy to support performance for an event.

If exercise is **longer than 60 to 90 minutes**, it can be beneficial to **top-up with some extra carbohydrates** to help maintain energy levels.

Fruit, muesli bars, fruit buns or simple sandwiches can be good options.

After the event, within 1 hour

Water is best to replace fluids lost during play. Skip unnecessary sugary drinks, energy drinks, or sports drinks.

Other great options include,

- **Fruits and vegetables**, such as watermelon, oranges, banana and vegetable sticks.
- **Milk**.

Refuel with a nutritious meal that contains **carbohydrates and protein** such as fruit smoothie, lean beef or lentil bolognaise, or a simple chicken and salad sandwich.

Have a diet rich in the **five food groups*** to assist recovery in the days following the event.

*Australia Guide to Healthy Eating, The Five Food Groups. www.eatforhealth.gov.au/food-essentials/five-food-groups.

Sources:

1- National Health and Medical Research Council. [Nutrient Reference Values for Australia and New Zealand: Water](#). 2006.

2- Sports Dietitians Australia. [Resource Hub, Factsheets: Across the Lifespan, Fuelling & Recovering](#).