



Students Activities

Upper Primary Years 5 & 6

Week 13

Title: Fast And Furious

Theme: Sport Nutrition

Learning Outcomes:

- Students identify the importance of eating properly before and after sport.
- Students develop an understanding of the type of foods for optimising energy intake before exercising and apply this knowledge to the correct timing of food intakes.
- Students understand the importance of recovery food for elite athletes and list appropriate recovery foods.

Eating before sport is important to boost performance and prevent fatigue. Inadequate food intake is a very common reason for poor performance in sport. Elite and recreational athletes need to have a good understanding of what to eat and when to boost their performance. Have you ever felt tired while playing sport? Did you remember to eat properly before you started?

Remember, that athletes have the same basic nutritional needs as non-athletes. The principles of their diet are based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating. They should eat high carbohydrate foods, like pasta, cereal, and bread for energy. They also need to eat protein foods like meat, chicken and dairy to help with muscle strength and recovery. They should eat fruit and vegetables every day, including the aim of 2 fruit and 5 vegetables based on the NHMRC recommendations. They need to avoid high fat and high sugar foods as these do not provide all the necessary nutrients to keep them healthy and maintain their physique for their sport. So basically, athletes need to eat a healthy diet like all of us!

The next important thing to think about is the timing of the food eaten before exercise. We all know that food is going to help fuel our bodies, but eating too much or the wrong thing can actually cause stomach upsets, cramping, and general discomfort which will be detrimental to performance. Ideally, eating a meal in the 1-2 hours before sport will be adequate to give bodies the energy it needs to perform well.

What type of food is appropriate? High carbohydrate foods are the best to eat before sport, as the bodies preferred fuel source during activity is called glycogen. Glycogen is similar to glucose, and it comes from carbohydrate foods. Pasta, rice, bread, cereal, dry biscuits, noodles are all examples of high carbohydrate foods. Can you think of examples of delicious and healthy meals and snacks that include these foods?

If you play sport on the weekend, and it's an early morning start, make sure you have breakfast. The carbohydrates in the food you eat will be the best way to get the energy hit your body needs. If you eat two hours before sport starts, have a regular sized breakfast like a bowl of cereal with milk and fruit, or a couple of pieces of toast, an egg, and some baked beans. Your body will be able to digest this food and turn it into energy in the time before the whistle blows. If you only have an hour until you start playing, still have your regular breakfast foods, but just a smaller serve than normal. This will make sure that you are still fuelling your





body well, but not overloading it with too much food that can cause stomach upsets, cramping, and general discomfort while you are playing. Remember to sip on fluids before sport to keep you hydrated. Water is best, but milk at breakfast or a small glass of juice will also help to hydrate and energize your body. Remember, breakfast is the most important way to naturally boost your energy levels. Whether it's for brain energy at school, or muscle energy for sport, breakfast is the only way to start the day.

If you play sport after school, make sure during the day you have had breakfast, morning recess, lunch and an afternoon snack before you start. This all helps to boost your body's fuel levels so you can be your best!

Elite athletes have a very strict eating plan before their sport. For example, AFL footballers will time their food intake so that they have eaten every 2-3 hours leading up to the start of the game. They will have breakfast, lunch, and snacks in between. They may even have an early dinner about 4pm if they are playing a night game. They will constantly sip on fluids during to keep hydrated. They understand the importance of eating well balanced, regular meals and snacks to boost their performance and prevent fatigue. They will eat during breaks in their match, at quarter time, half time, and three quarter time. This helps to make sure that they have as much energy as possible to make it through to the final siren. The types of food they eat during a game include sandwiches, fruit, and sports foods like gels. Fluid intake is also vital.

Phew, after all that activity you are probably very tired! Eating after sport is a great way for your muscles, brain and body to recover from the exertion of the activity. Elite athletes will start eating almost immediately after their sport. This helps their muscles to repair and recover so they can prevent soreness and get back to feeling great as soon as possible. AFL players will eat in the change rooms straight after the game. They have salad rolls, sandwiches, fruit based muffins and fluids. After this, they go home and have a main meal, usually dinner, which includes some protein like meat or chicken, some carbohydrates like pasta, rice, or noodles, and lots of vegetables. They also drink lots to replenish their fluid levels. You too should eat straight after you play. It will help your body to recover, grow and get stronger. Like the elite athletes, eat a healthy meal of protein, carbohydrates, and vegies or fruit.

If you want to play like an athlete, eat like an athlete!

Learning Activity 1 – Recovery Food

Create a list of recovery foods that would be appropriate to sell in a canteen for after sport. Remember to include healthy foods with a good source of protein, carbohydrates and some vegetables/fruit.

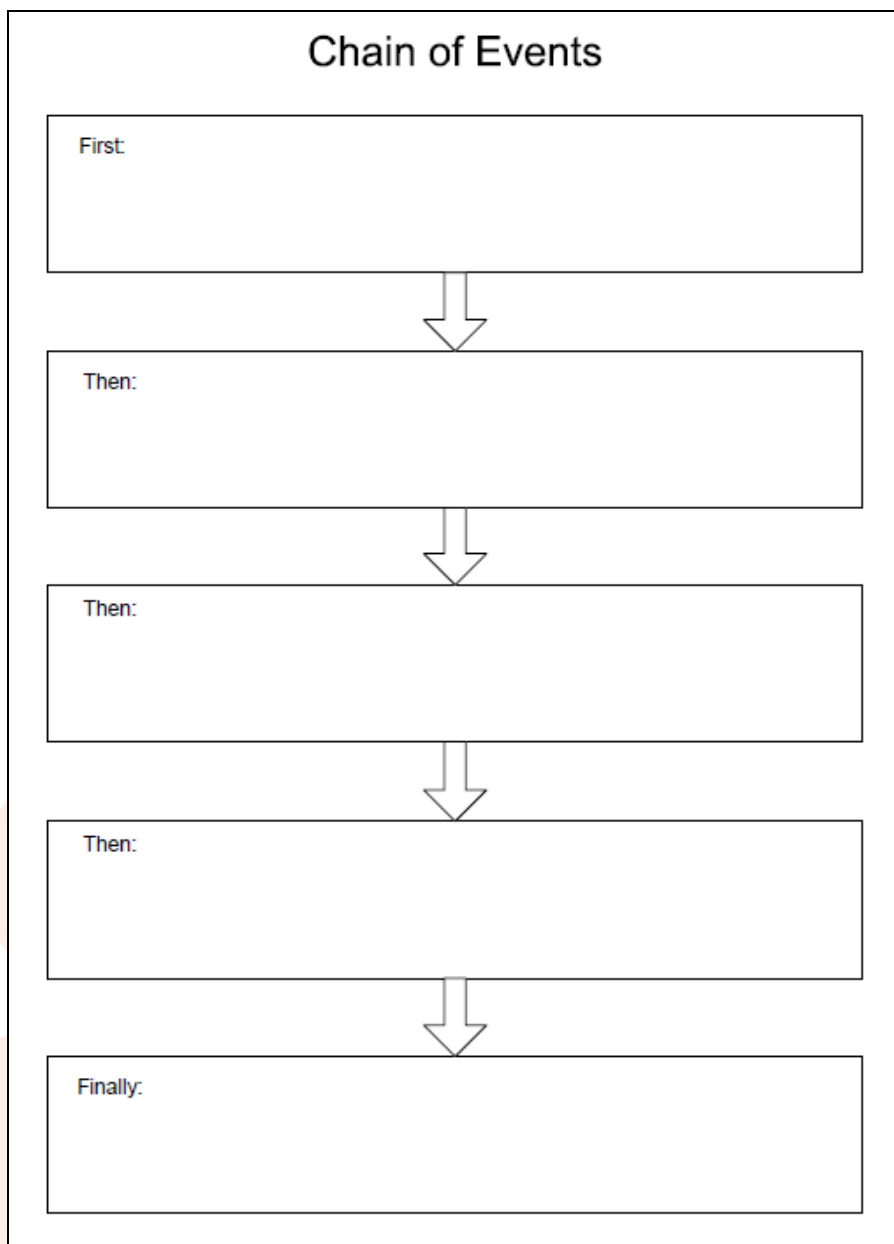
Learning Activity 2 – Food Time Line

Design an educational chart or Timeline that describes the type of food and the timing of the food that your favourite athlete should eat before their sport.

Use a graphic organisers such as the chain of events (below) or flow chart to assist you in organising, sequencing and formatting your ideas.

You can also use cut-outs from magazines, illustrations, and food packages.





Support materials and references

For Kids

- 1Seven article: [Energy to Burn](#)
- 1Seven article: [Eat smart](#)
- 1Seven article: [Fill your plate with colour](#)

For Teachers & Parents

- 1Seven article: [Find out about your food](#)
- 1Seven article: [Healthy Eating Guide](#)

