

## HYDRATION AND NUTRITION

As we leave winter and the weather becomes warmer and more humid, we need to pay closer attention to hydration and nutrition. Fortunately, one of our members, Cathie Price, a triathlete, ironman competitor, and certified ironman coach has your back and has prepared the following information to help us ride strong and be safe.

### **Hydration**

Like many of you, I too am a snowbird. I make the trip to the warmer weather so that my cycling season can continue. Sometimes we forget that the weather is different, and our performance will be different than it was in the summer and fall where we live. It is important for our bodies to adjust to the heat. We need to make sure we consume water and electrolytes while engaged in high cardio activities. This becomes more important as the temperature and humidity increase.

### **Before the ride**

So how much should you be drinking? Fluid is the most important thing for our bodies. We need to make sure we arrive at a bike ride properly hydrated and fueled. You should have 1 oz of liquid per 10 lbs of body weight in the morning prior to your ride.

During the ride, depending upon your sweat loss, the body can absorb up to 32 oz per hour (1 large water bottle). One of your bottles should contain an electrolyte with ~500 to 700 mg of sodium. When we sweat, we are also losing sodium (electrolytes) from our bodies. If you are a salty sweater, then you need up to 1,000 mg per 32 oz of water.

Options for sodium are sports drinks, electrolyte, or salt tablets. But small amounts of salty food can work if you can eat while you ride or during your breaks.

### **Post-ride hydration**

After your ride, you should drink 16 to 24 fluid ounces per pound of body weight lost during the ride. I know not everyone weighs themselves but think about how much sweat you may have lost during the ride, and make sure you replace it with at least a bottle of water.

### **Tips to remember to drink** – *The old saying is true, if you are thirsty, then it's too late:*

- Set a timer on your Garmin or sports watch. Suggest a 15-minute timer so that you are reaching for your bottle at least every 15 minutes for a drink.
- If you see the person in front of you grab their water bottle, good clue for you to grab yours and take a drink.
- Ride leaders are encouraged to build quick water breaks into their rides.
- When you stop for the break, ensure you have consumed at least one bottle per hour. Re-fill if you only are carrying one bottle. But I highly recommend you have two on the go, one water and one with electrolyte.

### **Nutrition**

The body stores enough carbohydrates to fuel an athlete for 90 to 120 minutes. After the 120-minute mark, your body needs fuel from other sources to supplement its carbohydrate stores.

## **Before the ride**

These meals should be food that can be easily digested such as oatmeal, banana, and bagel. Protein should be consumed only in small amounts, and fat intake should be very low to minimize the risk of gastrointestinal upset.

Keep in mind, carbohydrates high in fiber and gas forming foods such as legumes, onions, cabbage, and bran products, are NOT recommended on the day before the big event as they may cause intestinal discomfort.

For rides lasting from 1 to 3 hours, you should consume up to 60 grams of carbohydrates per hour. Consume with water, not electrolytes.

For rides lasting longer than 3 hours, you should consume 60 to 70 grams of carbohydrates per hour. Consume with water, not electrolytes.

Our bodies absorb between 250 to 300 calories/hour. One gel = 100 calories.

Bear in mind, everyone is different, and handles food in different ways. It is up to you to try different things before and during your rides to see what works best for you. The important thing to remember is you need to make sure you are consuming calories that will fuel you for the entire ride. This will ensure you finish strong and with enough energy for the rest of your day.

## **Post-ride nutrition**

It is also important to replenish the body and to provide the nutrients needed for muscle repair. Within 20 to 30 minutes of the completion of your ride consume 15 to 25 grams of high-quality protein, such as a glass of chocolate milk, eggs, or low-fat meat such as turkey or chicken.

## **Summary or quick tips before you start the ride:**

- Do you have bottles with water and electrolytes?
- Do you have your fuel (gel or energy bar)?
- Are you hydrated and fueled before you start?
- Is your pee deep yellow or clear? If it is deep yellow, you are dehydrated.
- Is your Garmin or sports watch set to remind you to drink/eat?

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