

Endurance Coach

Nutrition Newsletter

"Endurance Athletes and Bowel Problems"

Many athletes experience bowel problems during trainings and competition. This may just be a case of the nerves on event day or it could be something more common such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS).

What is Irritable Bowel Syndrome?

Irritable Bowel Syndrome is characterised by changes in bowel habits such as diarrhoea, abdominal pain, distended abdomen, increased gas production, and other symptoms including nausea, heartburn, backache and tiredness. It does affect about 15% of the population and is most commonly misdiagnosed by many. IBS affects people under the age of 35 years and is found to be more common in women than men. Stress is another factor that can contribute to IBS as well as genetics and environmental conditions.

Treatment

Treatment for IBS is mostly done by a dietary programme however; there is no one guaranteed diet for everyone as most individuals respond differently to foods. Other forms of treatment include meditation to help relieve stress, Aloe Vera juice and bowel medications.

Dietary recommendations

- High fibre diets is useful to increase the bulk of bowel movements
- Exercise and high fluid intakes are important

- Maintain a diet low in fat with moderate amounts of protein intake. Fat is known to stimulate the bowel after eating and cause discomfort over the next day
- Avoid fizzy drinks and eat smaller meals more often – this will reduce the amount of wind and gas production
- Eat slowly and take time to avoid gulping and swallowing air
- Limit spicy and strong flavoured foods

Preventing stomach upsets during exercise

Stomach upsets during training or competitions can be detrimental to your performance and can cause you a lot of pain and discomfort during events. One of the main factors contributing to this is your dietary intake leading up to an event. It is important to test out your pre-competition meals during trainings in order to find what suits your body best. Here are a few tips to remember when choosing foods.

- Reduce your fat intake in the pre-competition meal – use low fat milk, eliminate butter/margarine and do not choose a fried meal for breakfast
- Reduce your fibre intake by choosing lower-fibre cereals (eg cornflakes, rice bubbles, white rice, pasta & bread)
- Liquid meals are a great option to have as they empty quickly from the stomach and are useful to those athletes who find it difficult to consume solid meals before events
- Increase your fluid intake

Meal ideas.....

- Porridge with milk and fruit
- Creamed rice and milk
- Low fat pancakes and milk
- Muffins/crumpets/scores with jam or honey
- Pasta with a tomato based sauce (avoid creamy sauces)
- White toast with spaghetti
- White toast with low fat spreads – eg honey or jam
- Cereals with trim milk and yoghurt – eg cornflakes, nutrigrain, weetbix or rice bubbles

Tip of the month



Creamy alternative

Carnation evaporated milk is an ideal alternative to cream. It's a quick and easy way to add creamy consistency to your meals with just a quarter of the fat and only half the calories cream has. Great ingredient for those homemade winter soups, pasta meals and baking treats.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



‘Curried Kumara Soup’

INGREDIENTS

50g butter
1 tsp curry powder
2 cloves garlic, crushed
500g kumara (peeled & sliced)
2 cups water
3 cups low-fat milk
2 tsp instant chicken stock

METHOD

1. Add the crushed garlic and curry powder to the butter in a large saucepan.
2. Peel the kumara and slice 1cm thick. Cook in butter without browning for 1-2 minutes, then add the water
3. Cover and cook for 10 minutes until tender.
4. Stir in chicken stock, then puree, thinning with milk. Serves 4.

References

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