



## Getting the Edge: Nutrition Tips for Women's TENNIS

Championship Tennis players need energy for:

*Speed*

*Strength*

*Endurance*

Good nutrition can help you to sharpen these skills. To be sure that you are in the best possible shape for practices and competitions, **follow these basic guidelines:**

- Eat a variety of Carbohydrates, Protein and Fat, but focus on Carbs. These provide your body with the most of your energy.
- Eat throughout the day to keep your energy levels high.
- Drink Fluids throughout the day, including during and after practice.

**How does my body use fuel?** Tennis is an interesting sport. It requires your body to efficiently utilize two different systems to provide optimum levels of energy:

- Tennis primarily uses anaerobic energy from carbohydrates for quick actions that are needed to score points.
- Tennis matches often last a long time. During long matches your body produces a different type of energy by using the aerobic system. This system uses carbohydrates and fats as fuel.
- Protein is primarily used for repair, maintenance, and growth of cells throughout your body. As a last resort it can be used for fuel.

### Planning for Your Carbohydrate Needs

Your body primarily needs carbohydrates. This means most of your meals should be centered around carbohydrates which include starches (breads, grains, cereals), fruits, and vegetables. Here is an example of a convenient, high-carbohydrate meal:

- Turkey Sandwich - 3 oz. turkey, 2 slices whole wheat bread, 1 medium tomato, 1 Tbsp. mayo
- 1 medium orange
- 1 oz. pretzels
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup carrot sticks

**Food Timing Guidelines:** Eat small amounts throughout the day to stay fueled for classes and workouts.

6-8am	Practice, weights, conditioning
8 - 8:30am	Breakfast (Carbs, Protein)
10am	Snack (Carbs)
12 - 1	Lunch (Carbs, Protein)
2or3 - 5pm	Practice, weights
5 - 5:15pm	Snack (Carbs, no protein)
6-7pm	Dinner (Carbs, Protein)
9-10pm	Snack (Carbs, protein okay, not necessary)

## Fluid tips:

- Thirst is not a good indicator of hydration level. Drink enough fluids through the day to keep your urine clear and pale, no darker than a yellow post-it note. Urine darker than a yellow post-it note may indicate dehydration. Drink more fluids.
- Drink 2 cups of water one hour before practice or competition.
- Drink 4-8 oz 15 minutes before your event on competition days.
- Bring a water bottle to practice and keep it with you on the court. Drink between sets and immediately before and after practice.
- Drink 5 to 10 oz every 15 minutes during practice.
- Weigh in immediately before and after your workout. Drink at least 2.5 cups of fluids for every pound of weight lost during practice. Replace weight loss within 24 hours.
- Keep a log of how many cups of fluids you drink until it becomes a habit. Carry a water bottle.
- Choose a sports drink during practice and meets to replenish carbohydrates as well as fluids
- Avoid alcohol and too many caffeinated beverages; they contribute to fluid loss. Also avoid excessive caffeinated beverages (> 2 cups per day)

## Eating during Tennis Meets:

- Eat high-carbohydrate, easy-to-digest foods that are familiar when there is a short time between matches (less than 1 hour). Try bananas, crackers, or sports drinks.
- Add more carbohydrate (500 - 1000 calories) when you have more time before your match (2-4 hours). Use bagels, English muffins, jelly, high-carb energy bars, gels, or raisins.
- Add small amounts of protein with the added carbohydrate, such as low-fat yogurt, low-fat milk with graham crackers, turkey or chicken sandwiches, or energy bars containing 7 - 14 g of protein if greater than 4 hours between events.
- Maintain adequate fluids. Remember, your urine should be pale, clear and fairly odorless.

## Supplements you may need:

**Multivitamin:** Take a multivitamin/mineral tablet daily. (Centrum or a "look-a-like" is good) as an insurance policy to allow for erratic schedules and high performance demands

**Calcium:** A diet consistently low in Calcium can contribute to stress fractures and longer recovery times if injured. Sources: milk, yogurt, cheese, calcium fortified juices and cereals, soy products, and calcium supplements.

**Iron:** Essential for oxygen transport from lungs to working muscles. Low iron can lead to low energy and endurance. Sources: lean red meats, dark meat of chicken or turkey, fortified breads and cereals, beans and peas (dried). Supplements have side effects, see Dr. Porter before using.

**Sodium, Potassium:** These nutrients are important for rehydration. When you are playing tennis in high temperatures, be sure to use a sports drink for rehydration and recovery.

## Weight management:

1. "In season" *is not* a good time to try to reduce body fat or gain lean body mass. You can really decrease your energy for performance.
2. For weight loss, reduce calories ~300 /day (not below 1400 calories) and consider adding cardio. If your calories are typically below 2400 or you are trying to reduce, a multivitamin is essential.
3. For weight gain (lean mass), add calories ~500/day and work hard in the weight room.
4. Be aware that poor sleep and stress can also impact weight management and performance.
5. Use of weight loss pills, teas, or laxatives, etc., can be hazardous to your health, sleep, and, hence, performance.
6. Seek help if you have concerns in this area to learn what could work for you and keep your performance high at the same time.