



### Nutritional Tips from Jane Griffin

#### 1. From 8 – 2 weeks before the event

Carbohydrate is the most important fuel for distance runners but unfortunately the body's capacity to store it in our muscles is limited (unlike fat which can be stored in the body in unlimited amounts). Your diet should be aimed at keeping the stores topped up, particularly after training runs.

- ✓ Make sure all your meals contain carbohydrate e.g. bread, rice, potatoes, breakfast cereals, pulses (e.g. baked beans or red kidney beans) and sweetcorn. Fruits, fruit juices, milk and yogurt, honey and sugar are also all sources of carbohydrate which can push up your carbohydrate intake without too much bulkiness.
- ✓ As you increase your mileage over the coming weeks you may notice that your legs feel heavy and that you lack energy toward the end of your training runs. These are sure signs that you need to increase your intake of carbohydrate a little – just by increasing your portions slightly or eating more frequently.
- ✓ Try to get into the habit of refueling as soon as possible after your training run as this is when your muscles take up carbohydrate more easily. This is something that gets more and more important as your mileage and training increase.
- ✓ Keep your diet interesting by including different sources of carbohydrate. Pasta is good because it is quick and easy to prepare but it is not the only source of carbohydrate!

- ✓ Make sure you have breakfast every day, especially if you are running in the morning. Get into the habit of having breakfast **before** a morning run if you are a runner who goes out on an empty stomach. Remember the race is at 9.00am and you **will** need to eat before the race. Use the coming weeks to find out what breakfast suits you best and then stick to that on the big day e.g. cereals, porridge, toast, baked beans on toast, bagels or toasted muffins.
  
- ✓ Getting your fluid intake is vital as June could well be a hot and sunny month. Drinking water on the route is better than nothing but if the forecast is predicting a significant rise in temperature as the morning goes on you may well find that a sports drink will be a better choice. Sweat contains salt and this needs to be replaced otherwise you could be putting yourself at risk of getting muscle cramps. Practice using a sports drink in training, find out what suits you best and take a couple of bottles with you. Carry one in each hand and practice drinking from each in turn when you are out running. Gatorade is a great sports drink to take out with you whilst training – this will be available on race day so its best to train with it too.
  
- ✓ Lastly keep up your intake of fruit and vegetables, aiming for that 5-a-day target. These foods contain “antioxidant nutrients” which not only help to protect your body against major diseases but also play a part in preventing minor infections such as colds, sore throats, chest infections etc. Training can put a strain on your body’s defense mechanism putting you more at risk of getting colds etc – even in the summer. Enjoy the variety of fruits and vegetables that are available in the summer months and help to keep yourself fit and healthy for June 22nd.