BALLYMORE EUSTACE GAA & LGFA

Healthy Eating & Hydration

Fuel for training and match days – a guide for players and parents

Ballymore Eustace GAA & LGFA · Bishopslane, Ballymore Eustace, Co. Kildare

Food is fuel

Good food and plenty of water help players train well, play well and recover. You don't need special products – normal, balanced family meals do the job.

Build a balanced plate

Carbohydrates – energy

Bread, pasta, rice, potatoes, porridge, cereals, wraps. The main fuel for running and playing.

Protein – growth and repair

Chicken, fish, eggs, meat, beans, lentils, milk, yogurt, cheese. Helps muscles grow and recover.

Fruit and vegetables

Aim for plenty of colour at every meal. Vitamins and minerals keep you healthy.

Dairy and healthy fats

Milk, yogurt and cheese for strong bones. Small amounts of nuts, seeds, olive oil and oily fish.

Before training or a match

- **Main meal 2–3 hours before:** e.g. pasta with chicken, a chicken or ham sandwich, or porridge with fruit.
- **Snack 1 hour before (if hungry):** a banana, a yogurt, toast with jam, or a cereal bar.
- Avoid big, greasy or very sugary meals just before playing.

After training or a match

- Eat something within an hour: milk or a yogurt drink, a sandwich, fruit, or the next family meal.
- A mix of carbohydrate and protein helps recovery. Chocolate milk is a good, simple option.

Hydration

Even being a little dehydrated can make players tired and less focused.

- Bring a **named water bottle** to every session and match.
- Drink regularly through the day, not just at training.
- Take sips at every water break, especially on warm days.
- **Check your pee:** pale yellow means you're well hydrated; dark yellow means drink more.

Energy drinks are not for children

Energy drinks contain high levels of caffeine and sugar and are not suitable for children or teenagers. Water is the best drink for training. Milk is great for recovery.

Quick snack ideas for the kit bag

Before	After
Banana or apple	Milk or chocolate milk
Rice cakes with jam	Yogurt or yogurt drink
Small cereal bar	Cheese sandwich or wrap
Toast or a scone	Fruit and a handful of nuts (if no allergies)

Healthy habits

- Eat breakfast every day.
- Keep sweets, crisps and fizzy drinks as treats, not everyday foods.
- Get enough sleep – it matters as much as food for recovery.

This guide gives general healthy-eating advice. Players with allergies, medical conditions or special diets should follow advice from their doctor or a registered dietitian. Please tell your child's coach about any allergies.