

RIDER NUTRITION and ENDURANCE TIPS

by David Romaine

Nutrition!

Proper nutrition is the biggest and most undervalued aspect of a long endurance ride. Here are some tips to keep you going out there.

- A 2% loss in fluids can mean a 20% decline in performance. You should drink a bottle of water per hour on average (drink even if you're not feeling thirsty). You should also be eating something every 15-30 minutes. You should not try to wait and catch up on carbs later...it doesn't work. Your motto should be: **Eat little and eat often**. If it's a hot day, salt intake is important but power drinks and the like don't provide enough sodium. Salt tablets or another source should be considered to prevent cramps. I carry peanuts in a little bag for the salt. They're not as important early in the ride, but after 60-70 miles you will need to replace salts. You should have an electrolyte replacement drink on your bike at all times. Smart riders will carry both a bottle of water and a bottle of some sort of mix. This should be the case the entire ride.
- After your ride it is CRITICAL to your recovery to eat something and drink a carb-loaded sports drink within the first 30 minutes after you've stopped riding for the day. Your body will absorb carbs more readily during that time but the window closes as time goes by. You can't eat or drink enough later to make up if you didn't have something right after the ride. I drink a mix as soon as I get off the bike and some kind of protein (muscle repair) and carbs (replacement).
- In the AM you need to have a carb drink to replace glycogen that is lost in the liver during sleep. You want all you can store before beginning your ride.
- Twenty minutes before you begin your ride, have nothing. No GU, Fig Newtons, bananas, etc.
This helps your blood sugar to balance out.

These long rides in the heat are about survival. You can't do it without proper nutrition and fuel. Sometimes it's not the most trained rider that performs the best but the one with fuel reserves at the end.

Stay healthy out there!