

Particular diets serve up top athletes

May 12 2015, by Hamish Hastie



Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

Fuelling athletes has come a long way from just carb-loading before the big event.

Perth-based sports scientist Phil Evans from the Body Genius Institute works with WA athletes and says the right food and staying hydrated is paramount to a good game day performance.

He says they consider the athlete's gender, age, body type, pre-existing conditions as well as on-field and off-field activity because they all dictate what energy intake demands the body has.

He says genetic heritage plays a major role in how efficient the body is at breaking down foods.

"What you have to do then is look at the foods that would have been available to the athlete's genetic line in the past 100 or 150 years," he says.

"The big comparison would be up in the Arctic Circle, the Canadian Inuit would live off 80 per cent fat and protein, comparing that to say an Aboriginal who would eat lean meats like kangaroo and sparse vegetables and leafy greens.

"Their bodies are used to breaking down those traditional diets so they respond to the foods better."

Player roles impact on diet demands

Mr Evans says the demands of the sport and even the position the athlete plays was one of the biggest influences on an effective diet.

"Somebody who is an AFL athlete is very different to say a very young boxer that has to make weight," he says.

"One of the WAFL players we're working with is a midfielder so because he's the type of player that's very quick he needs very good sources of protein to ensure that he's recovering."

"Chicken and fish are very easy for his [body](#) to digest because it's a lighter protein source but both of them have still got the amino acid

profile he needs to fully recover.

He says given the recent supplements scandals in Australian sport it is more important than ever to turn [athletes](#) to a more natural diet if possible.

"The supplement is only ever a short term relief whilst you investigate why they're deficient in that area," he says.

Former Collingwood player and Swan Districts midfielder Jarrad Blight, 24, changed his diet in October and says he has never felt better.

"Now I'm eating lots of fresh fruit and veg, lots of chicken, oily fish and lean red meat and not as much gluten.

"My recovery now is amazing, the day after the game I feel fine.

"One thing I have noticed I'm getting less inflammation."

Provided by Science Network WA

Citation: Particular diets serve up top athletes (2015, May 12) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-05-diets-athletes.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--