

# WHITBY WOLVES

Coaches will help players develop their hockey skills but how can we as parents assist them to be at their strongest and help them stay focused during games and practices?

Following are some simple tips:

## 1. Help your player to keep their blood sugars at an optimum level

Watch for depression, anxiety, irritability, fatigue, headache, blurred vision and mental confusion in your player as these symptoms could indicate a low blood sugar level, commonly referred to as hypoglycemia, which could lead to injuries during a game or practice.

Sugars in the blood come mostly from carbohydrates from foods of plant origin such as fruit, vegetables, grains, syrups and honey. Table sugar is a pure crystalline form of sugar derived from sugar cane or beets. The sugar called lactose comes from milk and milk products. Eating fruits, vegetables, grains and dairy products, of course, isn't a problem for our bodies. The problem for our blood sugar level is the added sugar in processed foods, foods that come in boxes, cans, bags and jars.

But of course we do need sugars. Glucose is important because cells in our body take it from our bloodstream where a series of metabolic reactions convert it to carbon dioxide, water and adenosine triphosphate (ATP). ATP is the only energy currency of the body. Every single cell in our bodies, whether in the heart, brain, or muscles, requires ATP to function.

So we need glucose from carbohydrates but we need to eat the right kinds and the right amounts to prevent the undesirable effect of spiking and plummeting blood sugar levels.

Eliminating refined carbohydrates from the diet may be all that is needed to eliminate spiking and plummeting blood sugar levels. Complex carbohydrates take a longer time to digest and absorb. This creates a slow and steady increase in blood glucose and insulin. Good sources are legumes (beans, lentils, alfalfa, clover, peas, soy beans, and peanuts), oat bran, nuts, seeds, psyllium husks, pears, apples and most vegetables.

## 2. Iron

Iron carries oxygen to all parts of the body. If iron levels are low your player will be tired, pale and irritable. Foods high in iron are red meats, fish and poultry, dried beans, peas and lentils and some cereals are fortified with iron. Dark green leafy vegetables like spinach, dried fruit like raisins and apricots and quinoa are also good sources of iron. Your player will need approximately 8 mg of iron per day. Some breakfast cereals are fortified with as much as 18 mg per serving.

## High Iron Foods

### Vegetables



- Spinach
- Beet greens
- Dandelion greens
- Sweet potatoes
- Peas
- Broccoli
- String beans
- Collards
- Kale
- Chard

### Bread & Cereals



- White bread (enriched)
- Whole wheat bread
- Enriched macaroni
- Wheat products
- Bran cereals
- Corn meal
- Oat cereal
- Cream of Wheat
- Rye bread
- Enriched rice

### Sea Food



- Shrimp
- Dried cod
- Mackerel
- Sardines
- Oysters
- Haddock
- Clams
- Scallops
- Tuna

### Fruits



- Prunes
- Watermelon
- Dried apricots
- Dried peaches
- Strawberries
- Prune juice
- Raisins
- Dates
- Figs

### Meat



- Liver
- Liverwurst
- Beef
- Lamb
- Ham
- Turkey
- Chicken
- Veal
- Pork
- Dried beef
- Tongue
- Heart
- Kidney
- Brains

### Other Foods



- Eggs (Any Style)
- Dried peas
- Dried beans
- Instant breakfast
- Corn syrup
- Maple syrup
- Lentils
- Molasses

### 3. Hydration

Water is the best! Occasionally sparkling mineral water with natural flavouring can be substituted to quench thirst. Body temperature has the ability to rise one degree F. every 15 minutes during high intensity exercise. Under-hydration can lead to heat stroke. Avoid fruit juices and sodas which will spike blood sugars and actually cause dehydration.

### 4. Fat

Fats provide the most energy. Omega 3 fats include alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and all three are important. Cold water fish such as mackerel, salmon trout and tuna are high in EPA and DHA. Soybeans, wheat germ, flax seeds, chia seeds and nuts have good amounts of ALA. Omega 3's reduce inflammation and improve the ability of muscle cells to take up glucose. 1-2 tsp. daily of fish oil and 2 tbsp. of medium chain triglycerides like coconut oil are beneficial. Not only is the body undergoing a growth spurt but so is the brain which is not fully developed until 23-25 years of age. Fats are an important component of brain cells.

### 5. Vitamin D

Vitamin D is important for strong bones and strengthening of the immune system. It has a role in muscle function, helps to make heart, lungs and airways healthy, and it assists our brains to develop.

Vitamin D is created when sun light hits our skin. Although we must be careful not to get too much sun light, not getting enough can lead to disease.

We only need 5-15 minutes of sunshine, two to three times per week. Wearing shorts and a t-shirt on clean skin between the months of April and October is enough.

During the winter months we cannot make vitamin D from sun exposure. Very few foods contain vitamin D. We can get enough from one teaspoon of cod liver oil, cold water fish, sundried shiitake mushrooms and fortified milk.

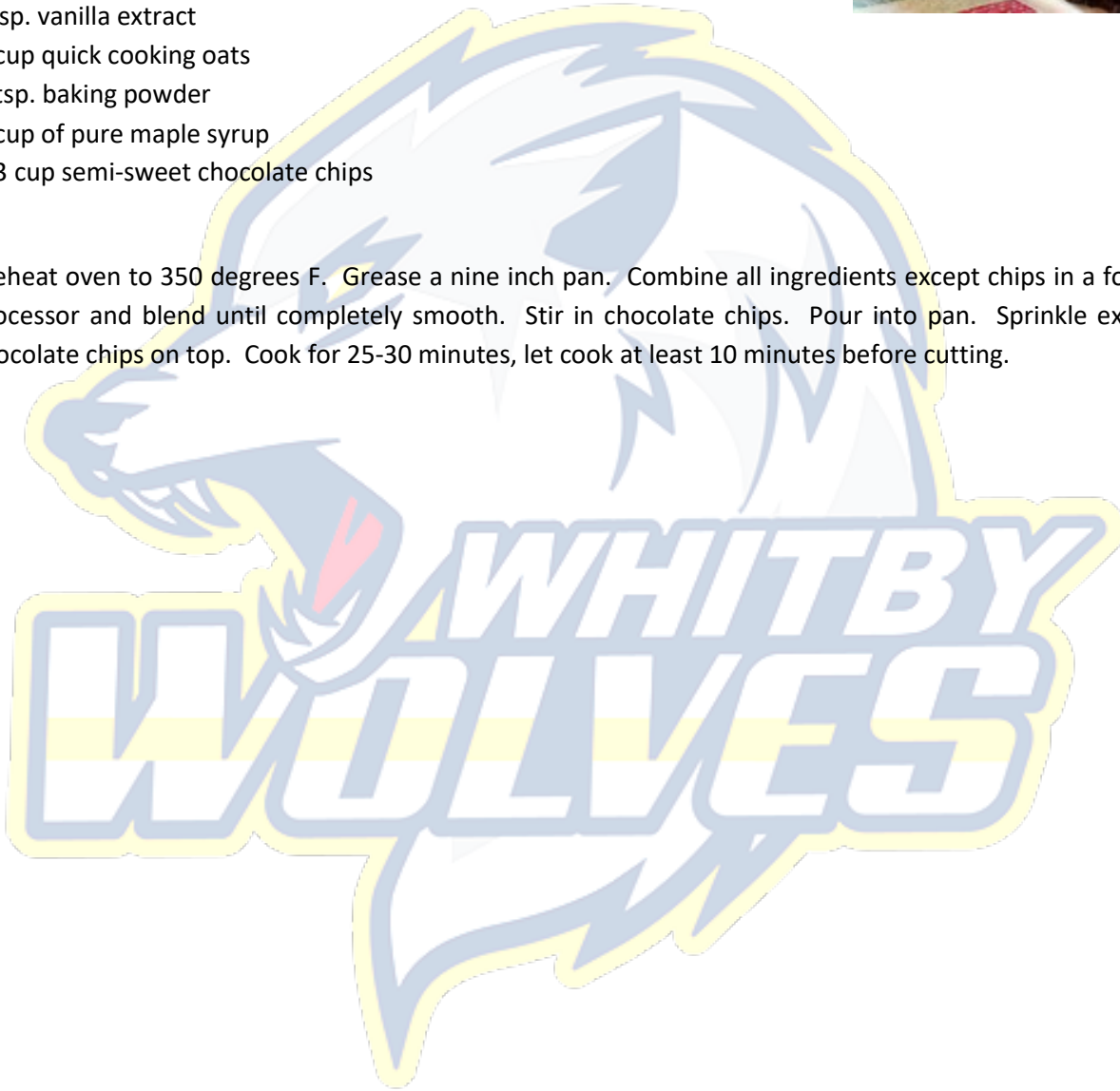
A couple of other tips: should your player's helmet rub on the forehead and cause acne, essential lavender oil can be applied after washing the area with warm water and soap. The lavender will prevent bacteria from growing; yoga is excellent for core strengthening and flexibility and will contribute to your daughter's strength and agility.

Everyone needs an occasional treat. Here is a recipe for black bean brownies that is high in fibre, iron, complex carbs and semi-sweet chocolate and cocoa.

- 2 eggs
- 1 ½ cups black beans (one 15 oz. can, drained and rinsed very well)
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ cup coconut oil
- 2 tbsp. cocoa powder
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- ½ cup quick cooking oats
- ½ tsp. baking powder
- ½ cup of pure maple syrup
- 2/3 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips



Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a nine inch pan. Combine all ingredients except chips in a food processor and blend until completely smooth. Stir in chocolate chips. Pour into pan. Sprinkle extra chocolate chips on top. Cook for 25-30 minutes, let cook at least 10 minutes before cutting.



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