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# Media Release

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**Date: 29 May 2002**

## **Dietitian Advises the England Squad**

Wendy Martinson, a State Registered Dietitian, has been helping to get the England squad into good shape for the World Cup.

“It won't be an aversion to sushi or other Japanese delicacies that dictate their choice” says Wendy “but the need for a diet high in carbohydrate foods and low in fat. Carbohydrates are the main fuel while they are playing. If their stores of carbohydrate (glycogen) in the muscle are low they won't perform as well and there is a risk of fatigue and injury. Muscle glycogen is used to provide immediate energy and can become severely depleted in intermittent, high-intensity exercise patterns like football and it is really important to replenish these in between matches.” The players are encouraged to have a recovery drink/snack containing carbohydrate and some protein as soon as possible after playing (ideally within 30 minutes) to hasten recovery of fuel stores and tired muscle fibres in preparation for the next session.

During each match the players will burn off about 950 Calories and according to Wendy will need between 3,000 to 3,800 Calories and 3 to 4 litres of fluid a day. Fluid intake will be crucial for the players in the hot and humid climate of the Far East. It is well known that a loss of even 2% body weight through fluid loss can greatly affect the ability to perform exercise efficiently and can decrease overall performance by 10-20%. Dehydration can affect coordination, concentration, reaction times and decision making all of which are important for optimum football performance. It is possible that players may lose 2-3 litres of fluid for every hour they are training or playing a match so it is vital that they rehydrate adequately and that they are not dehydrated before they start. Wendy encouraged the players to be aware of their hydration status and to check for pale coloured pee as an indication of whether they were drinking enough.

The menus were prepared in advance of the trip and a lot of the food will be flown out because it will not be available in the shops in Japan. Wendy has assessed each players carbohydrate requirements according to their weight. This works out, on average, at about 500 - 600g carbohydrate a day – about twice as much as most men eat each day in the UK. This would amount to over 7lb (3.2 kg) boiled new potatoes or 9 lbs (4.1kg) boiled noodles. Luckily players can have their carbohydrate from a variety of sources of carbohydrate including pasta, rice, bread, breakfast cereals and snacks such as Jaffa cakes, malt loaf, cereal bars, low fat rice pudding and custard and sports drinks. The Jaffa cakes, which are popular with the players, are low in fat and most of their 47 Calories come in the form of carbohydrate.

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**For more information contact:**

### **Notes to Editors**

The British Dietetic Association, founded in 1936, is the professional association for State Registered Dietitians (SRDs) in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Members of the Association hold a degree or recognised post-graduate diploma in nutrition and/or dietetics.

The British Dietetic Association is the nation's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. It has over 5,000 members, about two thirds of whom are employed in the National Health Service. The remaining dietitians work in education, industry, research and sports settings or as freelance consultants.

State Registered Dietitians interpret and translate the science of nutrition into practical ways of promoting nutritional well-being, disease treatment and the prevention of nutrition-related problems.

State Registration, awarded by The Health Professions Council, is an indication that a Dietitian is competent to practise, must work within an agreed Statement of Conduct and is a pre-requisite for employment in the National Health Service.

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