If it is your first gala – don’t worry or panic. The coaches will be there to guide you through the day and help you all they can. Any problems? – Just ask.

It is a good idea to have packed your bag the night before, with everything you might need. Here is a checklist, which should be useful to you (no glass bottles or any other breakable items).

* Two swimming costumes
* Goggles (plus a spare pair)
* 2 towels
* Deck/Pool shoes to wear at all times to prevent heat loss
* Clothes to keep warm on the poolside – hat, extra t-shirt, tracksuit etc.
* Food of sufficient quantity to last the day
* Money in case of emergency
* Drink in a suitable container – at least two litres – for a whole day
* Snack food – with lots of carbohydrates and low in fat.
* Music – iPod (to help relax or psyche you up), reading book or other pastime (games consoles are not allowed on poolside)
* Your game/swimming face!

**Note: Please ensure that your name is on all items**

**Arrival at a swimming gala**

When you arrive at a swimming pool for a gala, make sure you do so in plenty of time (at least 30 minutes before your warm-up time). Report to the coach that you have arrived. It is important that your coach sees you before the time that you have been told to attend.

**Check out**

Check out the pool complex layout and familiarise yourself with the important places you will need to go during the day. For example, toilets, reporting area, changing rooms, cafeteria, etc.

**Warm ups**

Check which warm up is yours and be on time for it. When you warm up make sure you get the most out of it. Don’t stop and talk to your friends, as you will have plenty of time to do this throughout the day. Your coach will have shown you what warm up to do. You must keep going and warm up your muscles properly to avoid injury.

**Cheering for others**

Do not expect others to cheer for you if you do not cheer for them. There is nothing better to

improve your performance than seeing others do well. Don’t just sit down and stare into space

– enjoy yourself!

**Don’t go outside**

When you are at a swimming gala and with an appointed coach, they are responsible for you and you must not leave the building without permission. If your parents are there, please ask the coach for permission to leave the building with them. After your last race it is a good thing to cheer others who are swimming from your Club.

**Good behaviour**

When you are representing the Club or training with the Club at your appointed session or at an invited session you are expected to behave properly. At the end of this book there is a section on discipline, which should be read by all swimmers and parents.

Swimmers are expected to sit with the team and **NOT** with parents in the spectator area.

Parents are not allowed on poolside at **ANY** time during a competition.

**Competitions: Diet Advice from British Swimming**

**When preparing to compete at a swimming competition you need to pay careful attention to what you eat.**

**Read on to find out what to eat the day before the event and during the day.**

**THE DAY BEFORE**

When competition time comes round, you’ll have plenty on your mind already. So the day before the event, keep exercise to a minimum – if anything at all – and eat meals and snacks high in complex carbohydrates. You need to keep those glycogen stores topped up.

* Drink fluids little and often to stay properly hydrated.
* Eat little and often – every two to four hours to keep your blood sugar levels steady and fuel your muscles in preparation for your event.
* Avoid big meals or over-eating in the evening – this will almost certainly make you feel uncomfortable and lethargic the next day.
* Try to stick to familiar foods. Curries, spicy foods, baked beans and pulses (unless you are used to eating them) can cause gas and bloating, so avoid eating anything that may cause stomach discomfort the next day. It’s best to stick to foods that you are familiar and compatible with!

**THE MORNING OF THE EVENT**

* Don’t swim on empty. Even if you feel nervous, make breakfast happen. Stick to easily digested foods – cereal with milk, porridge, banana with yoghurt, some fruit or toast with jam. If you’re really struggling, try liquid meals such as milkshakes, yoghurt drinks or a smoothie.
* It’s a good idea to rehearse your competition meal routine in training so you know exactly what agrees with you.

**SNACKS BETWEEN HEATS**

* Try to eat as soon as possible after your swim to give yourself as long as possible to recover if you have to swim again.
* High fat and simple sugar foods will do you no favours in competition – instead search out the complex carbohydrates again.
* If you can’t stomach anything solid try sports drinks, flavoured milk or diluted juice that will help replenish your energy supplies and assist the recovery of aching muscles.

The list below offers great food options to be snacking on in and around training for a competition. Remember to keep eating healthy foods from your regular diet though, such as fresh vegetables, nuts and fruits.

**Here are some more you can try**

 Water, diluted fruit juice with a pinch of salt or a sports drink

 Pasta salad

 Plain sandwiches e.g. chicken, tuna, cheese with salad, banana, peanut butter

 Bananas, grapes, apples, plums, pears

 Dried fruit e.g. raisins, apricots, mango

 Smoothies

 Crackers and rice cakes with bananas and/or honey

 Mini-pancakes, fruit buns

 Cereal bars, fruit bars, sesame snaps

 Yoghurt and yoghurt drinks

 Small bags of unsalted nuts e.g. peanuts, cashews, almonds

 Prepared vegetable crudit.s e.g. carrots, peppers, cucumber and celery

**Drinks**

This is very important. During a one hour training session a great deal of fluid can be lost from the body. To compensate for this, 1 litre of fluid per training hour should be available to the swimmer. Drinking prior to a training session is vital.

During a competition the swimmer should be careful not to dehydrate.

Swimming pool surrounds are notorious for being hot and sometimes unbearably so. During the day, drink should be taken little and often. Headaches, dizziness and nausea are some of the symptoms of the onset of dehydration.

**WHENEVER YOU ARE DOING PHYSICAL EXERCISE HAVE YOUR DRINKS BOTTLE CLOSE AT HAND**

**MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A RESERVE SUPPLY IN YOUR BAG**

Water is the best fluid to drink – **NO** fizzy drinks or high sugar sports drinks are allowed during training sessions unless recommended by a doctor.

Parents please note swimmers who do not turn up to training with the correct drinks bottles will not be allowed to consume their drinks until after the session has finished.