

NUTRITION INFORMATION FROM YOUR DIETITIAN

Sports Nutrition: Eating before training & competition

The pre-game or pre-event meal is your last chance to “top off” your body’s fuel tanks with carbohydrate-rich foods. Eating before training or competition helps ensure you have the energy you need to perform your best.

Your pre-event meal should be:

- 2 – 4 hours before start time
- Mostly carbohydrates (carbs), which are your body’s primary fuel source
- Moderate in protein
- Low in fat

The size of pre-event meals will vary based on your energy needs, sport, intensity level, duration of exercise, gender, and body size. Here are some examples of foods to consider.

Pre-game: Breakfast

Meal Option #1:

- 1-2 cups cereal with 1-1.5 cups milk (skim or 1%)
- Sliced fruit
- Handful of nuts

Meal Option #2:

- 1 cup low-fat or nonfat fruit yogurt
- 0.5-1 cup crunchy cereal (e.g., Grape Nuts, granola, Kashi)
- Fruit

Meal Option #3:

- 2 slices of toast OR 1 English muffin OR 1 bagel
- Top with 1-2 Tbsp. natural peanut butter, honey, and sliced banana
- 8-10 oz. milk (skim or 1%) or 100% orange juice

Meal Option #4:

- 2 eggs (or 1 egg + 1 egg white)
- 2 slices of toast

Pre-game: Lunch

Meal Option #1:

- Turkey Sandwich (2 slices whole grain bread, 2-3 slices deli turkey, 1 slice cheese, veggies)
- Piece of fruit
- 15-20 pretzels or crackers
- 1 cup milk

Meal Option #2:

- Pasta Salad (1.5 cups pasta; 3-5 oz. of canned tuna, chicken, or salmon; 1 cup of vegetables)
- 1-2 Tbsp. vinaigrette dressing
- Piece of fruit
- 1 cup milk or water

Meal Option #3:

- Tuna or salmon salad sandwich in whole wheat pita (try making it with olive oil and balsamic vinegar instead of mayonnaise)
- Fresh fruit
- 1 cup mini carrots
- Crackers or baked chips or pretzels
- 1 cup milk

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Tips to Remember:

- Meals should be mostly carbs with moderate amounts of protein and low in fat.
- Carbs are found in:
 - Grains (cereal, pasta, bread)
 - Starchy veggies (potatoes, corn, squash)
 - Fruit
 - Beans
 - Dairy products
- Consider low-fiber, easily digested foods, especially if you're not used to high-fiber foods (whole grains, fruits, veggies). Don't go without eating. If you get a "nervous stomach," consider fruit smoothies or sport nutrition products, which are easier to digest.
- One hour before competition, use sport drinks or sport products (gels, blocks) to top off carbohydrate stores.
- Don't experiment with new foods before a major competition. Instead, practice with new foods during training or practice sessions.
- Everyone is different. Figure out what you like and what you tolerate best.
- Remember to hydrate in the 4 hours before exercise (see handout on 'Hydration').
- For your pre-event meal, aim for 0.45 - 1.36 grams (g) of carbohydrate per pound of body weight (1-3 g per kg of body weight).

Example: If you weigh 125 lbs., you'll aim to eat 56 to 170g of carbohydrate.

$$\frac{125}{\text{Body weight}} (\text{lbs}) \times 0.45 = \underline{56} \text{ g} \quad (\text{low amount of carbs you should eat})$$

$$\frac{125}{\text{Body weight}} (\text{lbs}) \times 1.36 = \underline{170} \text{ g} \quad (\text{high amount of carbs you should eat})$$

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