



'Pre-Game'

What to Eat Before Training & Competition

Your pre-event meal is important. It is your last opportunity to “top-off” your body’s fuel tanks with carbohydrate-rich foods so you can step onto the field, up to the line, or into the blocks well-fueled, ready to compete, and confident that you are nutritionally ready to go. Your last meal before an intense training session or competition should be 2-4 hours prior. Since carbohydrate is your primary fuel source during exercise, you want this meal to be comprised primarily of carbohydrate. This meal should contain moderate amounts of protein, and be low in fat. A high-fat, high-protein meal just before exercise may delay gastric emptying and prevent carbohydrate from being readily digested, absorbed; it can also cause potential discomfort during exercise. Calorie contents of these pre-event meals will vary based on your sport, intensity level, duration of exercise, gender, size, and energy needs; however, the following meals offer some guidelines and give you some examples of foods to consider. Always remember to practice eating new foods before *training* sessions instead of trying something new before a big meet, race, game, or match. Determine what your body tolerates best - everyone is different and there is no *perfect* combination for everyone.



Pre-Game Breakfasts

MEAL #1: 1-2 cups cereal with 1-1.5 cups skim/1% milk, sliced fruit, and handful of nuts

MEAL #2: 1 cup lowfat/nonfat fruit yogurt, 1/2 - 1 cup crunchy cereal (i.e., grape nuts, granola, Kashi), fruit

MEAL #3: 2 slices of toast OR 1 English muffin OR 1 bagel with 1-2 Tbsp natural peanut butter, honey, and sliced banana; 8-10 oz skim/1% milk or orange juice

MEAL #4: 2 eggs (or 1 egg + 1 egg white), 2 slices of toast with honey or jam; 1 cup fruit; 1 cup milk

Tips to Remember:

- ✓ Carbohydrates come from grains (rice, cereal, crackers, pasta, bread), fruit, starchy veggies (potatoes, corn, peas, squash), and dairy (milk and yogurt)
- ✓ Your meal should contain mostly carbohydrate, moderate amounts of protein and be low in fat
- ✓ Consider low-fiber, easily digested foods for pre-game meals (especially if you are not used to eating a high fiber diet)
- ✓ Aim for 0.45 - 1.36 g of carbohydrate per lb. of body weight (or 1-3g/kg) in the pre-event meal
- ✓ If nerves keep you from tolerating too much food, consider a fruit smoothie or sport nutrition products, but don't go without eating!
- ✓ In the hour before, use sport drinks or sport products (gels, bloks) to top off carbohydrate stores
- ✓ Never experiment before a major competition! Practice in training what you plan to do for big events.
- ✓ Know your body, what you like and what you can tolerate



Pre-Game Lunches

MEAL #1: Turkey Sandwich (2 slices whole grain bread; 2-3 slices deli turkey or chicken, 1 slice mozzarella cheese, veggies); piece of fruit; 1 cup milk

MEAL #2: Pasta Salad (1.5 cups pasta, 1 cup veggies, 1/2 can tuna, chicken, or salmon, 1 cup veggies (broccoli, carrots, tomatoes, peas); 1.5 Tbsp vinaigrette dressing; piece of fruit

MEAL #3: 1 med baked potato or sweet potato; 2-3 turkey “roll-ups” (rolled slice of deli turkey); string cheese; 15-20 Kashi-type crackers; 1 apple

MEAL #4: Tuna or salmon salad sandwich in whole wheat pita (try making with olive oil and balsamic vinegar instead of mayonnaise), fresh fruit, crackers OR baked chips OR pretzels; 1 cup milk