

## PRE-GAME FUEL: *Timing, Nutrients & What to Eat*

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**TIMING:** A few hours before exercise is the time to top off your fuel tank to optimize performance! Depending on the time of day, this could be a snack or it could be a meal.

**NUTRIENTS:** As a general rule, pre-game snacks/meals should include: carbohydrates, some protein, and be lower in fat. Here's why:

- ✓ Carbohydrates provide quick burning fuel for high intensity, will help to boost the stores of carbohydrates in your muscles and liver, and can help to maintain blood sugar levels during exercise.
- ✓ Protein helps to build muscle.
- ✓ Foods that are lower in fat is key because of the length of time it takes to digest fat and eating high fat foods before exercise can lead to indigestion.

How much carbohydrates, protein, and fat largely depend on how much time before exercise. For example, if you're 3 – 4 hours pre-exercise, you can eat more (have more nutrients) than if it is only 1 hour pre-exercise.

To get technical: 1. Transfer your weight into kilograms (kg), 2. Plan enough fuel for about 1 gram of carbohydrates per kilogram body weight each 1 hour before exercise (up to 3-4 hours before).

Example: 150 pounds = 68.1 kg

1 hour before exercise: approx. 60 grams of carbohydrates (plus protein and some fat)

2 hours before exercise: approx. 120 grams of carbohydrates (plus protein and some fat)

3 hours before exercise: approx.. 180 grams of carbohydrates (plus protein and some fat)

4 hours before exercise: approx.. 240 grams of carbohydrates (plus protein and some fat)

### What to Eat

Perhaps more important than anything else is to opt for foods and fluid that will sit well with you and your system can tolerate. The best way to trial what fuels you the best is try different foods on practice days. And one thing to remember is to avoid trying something new as a pre-game meal/snack on game days, ALWAYS use practice to trial new foods.

Here are some ideas to try:

#### *3 – 4 hours before exercise*

Peanut butter and honey on whole wheat bread + a glass of low fat chocolate milk

Turkey or ham and cheese on whole wheat bread with a piece of fruit + a glass of water

Greek yogurt topped with whole grain granola, sliced fruit + a glass of water

Oatmeal topped with sliced bananas, walnuts, and honey + fruit juice

Eggs scrambled with whole wheat toast + fruit smoothie

Grilled chicken with rice, veggies + a glass of low fat chocolate milk

Hummus with whole grain pita bread, slice of cheese, grilled veggies + a glass of water



30 – 60 minutes before

*Keep in mind that fluids maybe a better choice than food, especially for athletes with nervous stomachs, fluids may be better tolerated than food.*

Fig bar

Small bowl of cereal with low fat milk

Graham crackers

Banana

Slice of bread with jelly or honey

Sports gel

Sports drink

Sports bar (e.g. Clif bar)



Lastly, remember, food is fuel and choosing nutrient-rich foods will help maximize your training efforts! For a customized nutrition plan, find a sports dietitian near you and have a custom fit plan designed to fuel your body, visit [www.scandpg.org/search-rd/](http://www.scandpg.org/search-rd/) to find a sports dietitian near you!