



NUTRITION CONSULTING INC.

Sports Nutrition BEFORE Training/Competing

By Andrea Holwegner BSc, RD

MOST IMPORTANT: Choose Familiar & Tested Foods for Competing

The timing, type, and amount of food you can tolerate depend on individual tolerance. Experiment to find the balance of food that makes you feel comfortable. Test out foods during training and stick to this when competing.

Liquid Assets:

If you are NOT consuming food, drink a sports drink to help you retain water. Drinking plain water with food is fine because food contains electrolytes to help you retain water.

How much to drink: 1 cup (250ml) of fluid 2 hrs before exercise & 1 cup (250ml) of fluid 30-40 min. before exercise.

Choose HIGH CARB Foods:

Foods high in carbs are quickly digested and therefore make ideal pre-training/competing choices. Carbs also "top off" muscle and liver glycogen (carb) stores. Carbs are found in grains/starches (pasta, rice, potatoes, cereals, crackers, granola bars etc.) and vegetables and fruit (fresh, frozen, canned, or dried). Some carbs are found in yogurt and milk also. Sugary foods and sweets also contain carb but its best to fill up on the foods listed above.

Choose Foods LOW IN FAT & Relatively Low in Protein & Fibre:

Fat is digested very slowly and can contribute to heaviness, cramping, and nausea if you eat too much fat before activity. Fat is found in high-fat meats, high-fat dairy, high-fat restaurant/fast food choices, high-fat snack foods such as chips, nuts, chocolate bars, and butter, margarine, and mayo. Protein and fibre are digested slowly. Some protein or fibre in a meal is all right but avoid large doses to prevent heaviness, cramping, and nausea during activity. Protein is found in meat/poultry/seafood, dairy foods, nuts/seeds, legumes (lentils, baked beans etc.) and protein bars/powders. Very high fibre foods to limit include bran based breakfast cereals, bran muffins, and legumes.

When to Eat:

MOST athletes tolerate eating a meal 2-4 hours before exercise & SOME athletes may be able to eat <2 hours before exercise. The closer you are to training the smaller your snack should be and you would want to choose primarily carbs and limit protein/fats to ensure quick digestion.

Ideas to get you started:

1-2 hours before training: GOAL – small snack/meal that is quickly digested

- Smoothie with milk, yogurt, frozen berries and banana
- Granola bar and juice box
- High carb sports bar, sports drink
- Moderately low-fibre cereal, such as cheerios, vector etc. with milk, and fruit

3-4 hours before training: GOAL – nutrition to sustain you through the training session

- Peanut butter sandwich with a banana and juice box
- Toast, eggs, fruit salad
- Pasta, meat sauce, salad with low-fat dressing
- Lean chicken/meat/seafood, rice/potato with limited added fat, stir fried veggies
- Sub/wrap with turkey/chicken/ham, mustard and veggies, milk