

THE PERFECT PRE-GAME MEAL

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*It's 7 a.m. Game day. Time for breakfast.
Cold pizza in the fridge.
Instant oatmeal in the pantry.
Teammates want to hit McDonalds.
What do you do?*

Have you ever found yourself in a dilemma like this? Welcome to the club! Most athletes know the importance of a pre-game meal, but don't know what to eat. This article will show you, in six easy steps, how a winner should fuel their body before the big game.

STEP 1: EAT LIGHT!

You *should be* excited before a game, but this excitement can cause nausea, diarrhea and even vomiting. A light pre-game meal should be eaten about three hours before the game and about five hours for a larger meal.

STEP 2: EMPHASIZE FOODS HIGH IN CARBOHYDRATES

Carbohydrates are your body's preferred energy source, and the pre-game meal is your last chance to store energy. Carbohydrates also leave the stomach quickly so you don't feel full during the game. High fat, high protein foods (like steak and eggs) take longer to empty from the stomach and are a poor energy source. Good choices for a pre-competition meal include bread, bagels, English muffins, pasta, breakfast cereals and fruits.

STEP 3: AVOID FOODS THAT PRODUCE GAS

Avoid gas-producing foods, high fiber foods and spicy foods that may cause indigestion.

STEP 4: AVOID SOFT DRINKS AND CANDY

Most soft drinks and candy contain simple sugars. Although you may experience a temporary *sugar high* from these products, you risk developing hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) that can leave you light-headed and fatigued.

STEP 5: DRINK PLENTY OF WATER

The fastest way to hurt performance is to become dehydrated, so drink plenty of water before and during the game. A good sports drink will also provide easily-absorbed carbohydrates to help you finish strong.

STEP 6: EXPERIMENT

Don't wait until game day to try a new food or sports drink. Unfamiliar foods and beverages could have a negative impact on performance if they disagree with you.

Figures 1 and 2 offer some sample breakfast and lunch (if you have a night game) menus.

There's no such thing as a single, perfect pre-game meal for all athletes. What works for a teammate may not work for you. But if you follow these six simple guidelines, you can develop *your perfect pre-game meal!*

BREAKFAST 1	BREAKFAST 2	BREAKFAST 3
Orange Juice	Breakfast Cereal	Bagel with Jelly
Oatmeal or	Skim or 1% Milk	Strawberries
Corn Grits	Banana	Low-Fat Yogurt
Whole Wheat Toast	Englis Muffin	Juice
with Jelly	with Jelly	
Hot Tea with Honey		

Figure 1: Sample pre-game menus for breakfast

LUNCH 1	LUNCH 2	LUNCH 3
Whole Wheat Bread	Vegetable Soup	Spaghetti
Turkey Breast Meat	Crackers	Tomato Sauce with
Lettuce and Tomato	Low-Fat Cottage	Mushrooms
Graham Crackers	Cheese	Green Beans or
Peach or Nectarine	Pineapple	Carrots
Water	Water	French Bread
		Orange
		Water

Figure 2: Sample pre-game menus for lunch

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