

# Fueling for Sports Nutrition

## Eating for Activity

### Before Activity

Eat enough food before activity to fuel your muscles and brain while you are active.

Choose foods that contain carbohydrate and protein to make sure your stomach empties before activity. To prevent stomach upset, choose foods that are low in fat and lower in fibre.

### 2–3 Hours Before Activity

Eat a meal 2–3 hours before an activity to give your body time to digest the food and convert it to energy to fuel muscles. If you begin an activity with food in your stomach, you may get cramps or an upset stomach.

### 1–2 Hours Before Activity

If it is not possible to eat 2–3 hours before an activity, you can still eat a snack 1–2 hours before you begin. This snack will help prevent hunger and provide energy for the activity.



#### Choose foods that contain carbohydrate and protein:

- Fruit or fruit smoothies
- Pasta in tomato sauce
- Rice
- Cereal
- Bread
- Skim or 1% milk fat (M.F.) milk or yogurt
- Hardboiled egg and toast

#### Avoid foods higher in fat or fibre:

- Cheeseburgers
- Fries or potato chips
- Deep fried food
- Ice cream
- Peas, beans, and lentils
- Cabbage, broccoli, or cauliflower



Be sure to drink water with your meals/ snacks to help you stay hydrated.



Before competition, always eat familiar foods. Do not try new foods before a competition to avoid stomach upset or cramps.

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### During Activity

Nutrition and hydration during activity will help improve your mental and physical performance while you train and compete.

#### Active for less than 1 hour:

- Drink water to stay hydrated
- No need to eat during activity

#### Intense activity for more than 1 hour:

- Aim for **30-60 g of carbohydrate per hour from food or drink**
- Spread out your carbohydrate intake by snacking on food and/or sipping a sports drink
- You also need to drink enough fluid to stay hydrated

#### Examples of carbohydrate food choices:



1 large banana  
27 g carbohydrate



1 medium orange  
15 g carbohydrate



4 dried apricots  
22 g carbohydrate



1 small box (28 g) raisins  
22 g carbohydrate

### Should I use Sports Food Products?

Sports food products such as sports gels, beans, chews, and bars can help you replace blood sugar and electrolytes (sodium and potassium) during intense activity that lasts more than 1 hour. However, these products do not keep you hydrated when you sweat a lot, so you need to drink water at the same time.

Sports food products are only helpful during activity. They are not recommended before or after activity because they are low in fibre and high in sugar and calories. It is better to choose foods with carbohydrate and protein at these times.

#### If you choose to consume sports food products during intense activity, be sure to:

- Use the Nutrition Facts table to see how much you need to eat to get 30–60 grams of carbohydrate per hour of intense activity
- Avoid products that contain sugar substitutes or caffeine
- Drink enough water with these products to prevent stomach upset and to ensure good hydration



During a competition, always eat familiar foods.  
Test new foods during training instead.

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## Eating for Activity

### After Activity

Nutrition and hydration are important after activity, training, or competition to refuel your muscles and repair tissue. The timing of your snack or meal after activity depends on how soon you will be active again.

#### If you have less than 24 hours until your next activity:

Eat foods that provide both carbohydrate and protein within 30 minutes of your activity. It is important to eat within this time to make sure your muscles fill up their energy stores.

#### If you have more than 24 hours until your next activity:

Eat foods that provide carbohydrate and protein when you are hungry for your next meal or snack. There is no need to eat within 30 minutes of activity if you are not hungry.

#### Carbohydrate Foods

- fresh, frozen, or canned fruit
- fruit smoothie
- whole grain bread, buns, pitas, wraps, bagels
- whole grain pasta or rice
- quinoa
- couscous
- whole grain cereal
- milk or fortified soy beverage

#### Protein Foods

- lean meat
- fish
- poultry
- tofu
- beans and lentils
- nuts, seeds, or nut/seed butters
- cheese
- cottage cheese
- Greek yogurt

