

# Fluids and Foods *BEFORE* Training/Competition



## Pre-exercise nutrition provides:

- Energy
- Physical comfort
- Mental alertness

## Targets:

- Optimal fluid intake
- High carbohydrate, moderate protein, and low fat

## Why?

- To maximize fluid levels and prevent dehydration.
- To supply food that is quickly and easily digested.
- To ensure energy to train or compete.
- To prevent hunger before and during exercise.

## Timing and meal/snack size are related.

Generally allow:

- 3-4 hours for a large meal to digest
- 2-3 hours for a smaller meal
- 1-2 hours for a small snack or blender/liquid meal or, whatever your own tolerance indicates

**CAUTION:** Spicy, gas producing, fatty, and/or fibre-rich foods may cause discomfort. Products containing caffeine may also be problematic.

## *BEFORE* exercise:

- Drink 400-600 mL of fluid 2 to 3 hours prior.
- Drink 150-350 mL fluid about 15 minutes before exercise, depending on your comfort and sport.
- Eat a meal or snack, high in carbohydrate, 2 to 4 hours prior. Ideal carbohydrate foods include whole grains, vegetables, fruit, juices, milk, yogurt, soy drinks, and legumes. Legumes are fibre-rich and can be gas-producing.
- If you have a “nervous stomach” before events, choose lower-fibre grain products, juice, pureed foods, or a meal replacement beverage.

*Experiment with fluids and foods in training to find out what, and how much, is comfortable for you.*

*Never try new foods or drinks before or during competition.*

**CONVERSION:** 250 mL = 1 cup = 8 oz.

## *BEFORE* – Focus on Fluid and Carbohydrate

### Meal ideas – from home or on the go:

The amount and type of food will vary according to the amount of time available between the meal/snack and the start of training or competition. Allow time for digestion.

- Toast/bagel with jam, peanut butter, juice, yogurt
- Oatmeal/cereal, milk, raisins, juice
- Pancakes with a little syrup/spread, ham, juice
- Grilled chicken sandwich, juice
- Lean meat sandwich, carrots, milk, oatmeal raisin cookie, fruit
- Minestrone soup, cheese, crackers, vegetable juice
- Chili, bagel, milk
- Pasta with tomato/lean meat sauce, applesauce, chocolate milk
- Lentil soup, crusty roll, salad with a little dressing, soy beverage

### Snack ideas:

- Fruit (fresh, canned, or juice)
- Fruit yogurt
- Low-fat muffin, juice, or applesauce
- Yogurt, social tea biscuits, juice
- Pita with hummus, vegetable juice
- Fig or oatmeal cookies, fruit, milk

### Snacks for backpack or car:

- Dry cereal
- Cereal, sport, or energy bars
- Juice boxes or fruit cup
- Crackers
- Dried fruit
- Trail mix with cereal

***From these guidelines, make a list of the drinks and foods that work for you.***

- Plan ahead and be prepared.
- Carry pre-exercise food.

Avoid bacterial contamination of meals and snacks. Keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot. Bacteria reproduce quickly at room temperature.

Before exercise, choose foods which are higher in carbohydrate and lower in protein and fat. This will allow quick absorption of carbohydrate energy from the food into the body. Include protein and fat sources during meals and snacks at other times during the day.

