Why Eat Anything?

- If your event or training is in the morning, your liver glycogen and blood sugar are likely to be low
- Exercising with low blood sugar may result in early fatigue, lightheadedness and generally poor performance
- While a pre-exercise meal won’t increase your glycogen stores, (you’ve got to depend on what you already have), it will elevate blood glucose, providing energy to working muscles. This has a significant impact on exercise lasting over one hour.
- Hunger impairs performance – eating first can prevent this.

What Kind of Food to Eat?

HIGH CARBOHYDRATE FOODS ARE BEST BECAUSE:

- They provide ready energy to working muscles
- They are digested quickly
- They fuel anaerobic and aerobic activities, especially those at higher intensities.

LIQUID MEALS WORK WELL FOR SOME ATHLETES BECAUSE:

- They empty quickly from the stomach
- They can be taken closer to event time
- They are a good source of carbohydrate
- They work well for the “nervous athlete” whose digestion is slowed by stress, and has trouble with solid food before competing
- They are perfect for multi-event competitions (like triathlons), tournaments and day-long activities

WHY NOT HIGH PROTEIN?

- It doesn’t provide quick energy
- It elevates resting metabolism, which could impair the body’s ability to cool off – this is problematic in hot weather
- Excess protein contributes water loss and may accelerate dehydration
- Many high protein foods are also high in fat, which slows digestion further
How Much to Eat and When?

- 3 to 4 hours prior to exercise allows enough time for a meal to leave the stomach
- The size of the meal (or snack) should decrease the closer it is taken to the event

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-5 grams of carbohydrate/kg</td>
<td>150-300 grams (≥600 calories)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 grams of carbohydrate/kg</td>
<td>100-200 grams (400-500 calories)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 gram of carbohydrate/kg</td>
<td>&lt;100 grams (200-400 calories)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquid meal</td>
<td>1-2 hours before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.5 gram/kg or less</td>
<td>200 calories or less</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lean sources of protein are fine to add to the pre-game meal in moderate amounts

RECOMMENDED FOOD CHOICES

- breads
- cereals
- bagels
- skim milk
- fruits
- potatoes
- rice
- low-fat yogurt
- juices
- pasta
- fig bars
- low-fat muffins

Foods To Avoid Pre-Game

- High fat foods – they take too long to digest and make most people feel sluggish
- High fiber foods may cause stomach distress; save these for another time of day
- Gas forming foods such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, onions, beans
- Salty foods may cause a bloated feeling
- Caffeinated beverages exacerbate water losses and may cause muscle tremors and heart palpitations

References: