

# Pre-Competition Nutrition

For gold-medal winning performances, it is important to adequately fuel the body before, during, and after competition. Food provides the body with the energy it needs to perform its very best. Just keep in mind that to reach your true potential as an athlete you need to be eating well throughout your training and don't wait until the day before your competition.

**“One great pre-event meal cannot make up for a for a poor training diet!”**

## The Role of a Pre-Competition Meal

- ⇒ Helps to maintain blood sugar level during exercise
- ⇒ Settles the stomach and prevents hunger
- ⇒ Provides carbohydrate for the muscles to use for energy
- ⇒ Helps the body begin competition in a hydrated state

## Guidelines for Pre-Competition Meals

- ⇒ As time gets closer to the competition decrease the volume of food
- ⇒ Eat high-carbohydrate, moderate protein, low-fat meal meals prior to competition
- ⇒ Consume foods your body is used to—competition day is not the time to try new foods! Make sure you have tested during training.
- ⇒ Limit high-fat and high sugar foods.
- ⇒ Allow time for food to digest prior to competition
- ⇒ Drink adequate fluids to stay hydrated

## Ideas for Pre-Competition Eating

### 2 hours or less prior to competition

- ⇒ Energy bar
- ⇒ Smoothie (frozen banana with milk)
- ⇒ Banana with peanut butter
- ⇒ Greek yogurt

### 2 hours or longer prior to competition

- ⇒ Oatmeal and piece of fresh fruit
- ⇒ Sandwich with ham or turkey (no cheese)
- ⇒ Peanut butter and jelly with glass of milk
- ⇒ Whole wheat pasta with chicken and marinara

## Why are my muscles cramping?

Muscle cramping may be due to fatigue, but there may be several nutritional factors leading to muscle cramps as well.

**Lack of fluids:** Dehydration is often a major cause of muscle cramping so it is important to consume adequate fluids.

**Loss of sodium and potassium:** Sweat and other water loss may lead to electrolyte imbalances which may result in muscle cramping. It is much more common for sodium to be the culprit of muscle cramping than potassium although they are both important electrolytes. Every athlete has their own unique sweat rate and it is important to make sure you are not losing too much sodium as it can negatively impact performance. Obviously, if you aren't in the game playing due to muscle cramps you cannot perform. If you are a heavy sweater you might try to add a little sodium to your diet. You can also eat pretzels or discuss possibly using salt tablets with a qualified sports dietitian.

**Lack of calcium.** Make sure to consume adequate calcium as it plays a key role in muscle contraction.

### Fluid Recommendations for Competition

When to drink	Amount
2 hours before	2 cups
10-20 minutes before	1 cup
Every 10-15 minutes during exercise	1 cup
After	Drink 20 oz for every pound of weight lost to optimally rehydrate.