Nutrition Fact Sheet | Issue 3 | May 2010

Eating Before Performing

Sports, Cardiovascular, and Wellness Nutrition
a dietetic practice group of the
eat right. American Dietetic Association

Scenario

The day of a performance, I often feel nervous and sometimes skip lunch, only to feel hungry later. Performances are usually in the evening so I know I need to eat something beforehand. Playing extended sets, I rarely get a break. What foods can I eat and at what times to supply me with enough energy to perform well the entire time?

Goals of Nutrition Before Performing

- Consume a carbohydrate-rich snack or meal before exercise to top off muscle stores. With pre-performance jitters, liquid meal replacements may be a better choice than whole foods.
- Include small amounts of protein in your pre-performance meal(s). Protein helps build and repair muscle tissue. Adequate protein before a performance may help reduce post-exercise muscle soreness.
- Choose pre-performance meal(s) that are low in fat and fiber to ensure optimal digestion.

Pre-Performance Foods & Fluids

3–4 Hours Before a Performance

- Peanut butter & honey on toast + instant breakfast drink
- Fruit and yogurt smoothie + low-fat granola
- Oatmeal with brown sugar and almonds + skim milk + banana
- Low-fat cottage cheese + apple butter + crackers + fresh grapes
- *Lean* hamburger on bun with lettuce & tomato + side salad + yogurt-fruit parfait
- Turkey and Swiss sandwich + fruit + sports drink
- Low-fat tuna melt sandwich + fruit cup + fat-free yogurt

30–60 Minutes Before a Performance

- Sports drink or water
- Sports gel, sport beans or gummies, sports bar
- Piece of fruit or jam sandwich

Written by SCAN registered dietitians (RDs). The key to optimal meal planning for athletes is individualization. For personalized nutrition plans contact a SCAN sports dietitian or Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics (CSSD) by accessing "Find a SCAN Dietitian" at **www.scandpg.org** | **800.249.2875**.

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Tips to Take With You

1. Experiment with foods and drinks in practice to determine the best timing and your tolerance for pre-performance foods.
2. Practice! Figuring out what works best for you will boost confidence in eating before performing.
3. Fuel muscles early with easily digestible carbohydrate-rich foods and beverages for performing later in the day.

Contact SCAN

Web site: www.scandpg.org
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