

## What Should I Eat Before Activity?

It is important to eat enough food before activity to fuel your muscles and brain for good mental and physical performance while you are active. High carbohydrate foods digest quickly and should be the main source of fuel within 2–3 hours before activity.

Meals and snacks should have a lot of carbohydrate, but only a medium amount of protein (one food guide serving of Meat and Alternatives or Milk and Alternatives) to make sure your stomach empties before activity. Choose foods that are low in fat and lower in fibre, to prevent gas or stomach upset.

### **Best to choose before activity: High carbohydrate but not too much protein, fibre or fat**

Pasta in tomato sauce

Wrap or tortilla with lean meat (chicken breast, ham)

Poached eggs on dry toast

Cereal such as oatmeal

Bread, buns, pita, tortilla, English muffin

1% or skim milk

2% milk fat (M.F.) or less yogurt with fruit

1% M.F. or less cottage cheese and fruit

Fruit smoothies made with milk rather than juice and with no added sugar or honey

Fresh fruit, carrots, potatoes, yam

### **Best to avoid before activity: Higher fat OR higher fibre**

Hamburgers

High fat meats and cheeses

Deep-fried foods, French fries or potato chips

Bran muffins (higher fat and higher fibre)

Ice cream

Cream-based soups or sauces (such as Alfredo)

Chocolate

Peas, beans and lentils (too much fibre before activity, so choose these after activity)

Cabbage, broccoli or cauliflower (too high in fibre before activity, so choose these after activity)



**Before a competition, always eat familiar foods that do not cause stomach upset or cramps when you are active. Do not try a new food before a competition!**

### **When Should I Eat?**

If you begin an activity with food in your stomach, you will likely have cramps or upset stomach. Eat your meal two to three hours before an activity to give your body time to digest the food and convert it to energy to fuel muscles.

If it is not possible to eat a meal two to three hours before an activity, you can still eat a snack one to two hours before you begin. This snack will help prevent hunger and provide energy for the activity.

Be sure to drink water with your meal or snack to help you stay well hydrated.

### **Sample Meals 2–3 Hours Before Activity**

Include all four of the Canada's Food Guide food groups in your meal 2–3 hours before your activity:

- 2 slices toast with 30–45 mL (2–3 Tbsp) nut or seed butter, a piece of fruit and 250 mL (1 cup) skim or 1% milk.
- Chicken sandwich with 30 g (1 oz) lower fat cheese, mustard and 125 mL (½ cup) unsweetened applesauce.
- 60–90 g (2–3 oz) roast beef and 250 mL (1 cup) vegetables combined in a stir-fry and served over 250 mL (1 cup) brown rice with 250 mL (1 cup) skim or 1% milk to drink or 175 g (¾ cup) yogurt for dessert.
- 2–3 poached or scrambled eggs wrapped in a tortilla shell with fresh or grilled vegetables and 30 g shredded lower fat cheese with a bowl (250 mL) of fruit salad on the side.
- 60–90 g (2–3 oz) grilled fish (such as salmon) with at least 250 mL (1 cup) grilled or steamed vegetables and a large baked potato with salsa and 15 mL (1 Tbsp) sour cream.

### **Sample Snacks 1–2 Hours Before Activity**

Include at least two food groups in your snack 1–2 hours before your activity:

- Small granola bar, 175 g (¾ cup) low fat yogurt and a banana.
- 60 mL (¼ cup) low fat cottage cheese, 250 mL (1 cup) pear slices and an English muffin.
- ½ roast beef sandwich with mustard instead of mayonnaise.
- 250 mL (1 cup) plain oatmeal made with skim or 1% milk and garnished with fresh apple slices and cinnamon.