



# NUTRITION

A Guide for Athletes



# INTRODUCTION

Ensuring you're properly fueled allows you to perform and train optimally. Nutrition becomes even more important during multi-sport games when you're facing unfamiliar schedules, quick turnarounds, and multiple competitions stretched over a few days. Nutrition preparation should begin several weeks, if not years, out from a games to build healthy habits. Follow these steps to best fuel your body for your next big event!



## PRACTICE PROPER PRE-GAME, PRE-PRACTICE, AND PRE-TRAINING NUTRITION

Pre-game meals should typically be rich in carbohydrates (bread, fruit, rice), moderate in protein (chicken, tuna, eggs), and lower in fat (oils, nuts, avocados, cheese). The meal should be eaten approximately 2-3 hours before competition or training, depending on your tolerance. Be careful about consuming foods high in fiber, because they can lead to an upset stomach. During competition, or immediately prior, a small snack can help you avoid hunger and maximize your energy. These snacks should be simpler carbohydrates like fruit or a granola bar, provide they are easy to digest.

## PLAN AHEAD

It's important for you to plan your meals ahead of a games. Ask yourself two questions: one, how much food should I eat? And two, when and where should I eat? Being familiar with your meals, possible locations, and when you're going to eat them goes a long way in helping you compete in a comfortable state.





It can be tricky eating from a menu. Here are some tips to help you play it safe!

**EAT THIS:**

- Grilled, baked, or poached meats
- Simmered, steamed or fresh seafood
- Grilled or marinated meats
- Red or white wine sauces
- Steamed vegetables
- Pasta primavera
- Picante, marinara, salsa sauces
- Whole grains (quinoa, breads, oatmeal)
- Lots of veggies (lettuce, tomatoes, onions)

**NOT THAT:**

- Battered, fried, or deep-fried meats
- Crisp noodles
- Sweet and sour sauces
- Cream, alfredo, or mayonnaise sauces
- Gravy or butter sauces
- Refried items (unless without lard)
- Sour cream, guacamole
- Cheese-topped, stuffed, or heavy meals

**EAT THIS, NOT THAT**

## CHECK OUT GROCERY STORES AND THE CAFETERIA MENU AHEAD OF TIME

Having an idea of your meals before you go to the village can help you simplify your selections and prevent overeating. A multi-sport games is not the time to try something new. Buying foods at the grocery store will help you control what you eat. Buy fruits, pre-cut veggies, milk/chocolate milk, and non-perishable items such as pretzels, crackers, and bread to help keep you energized during the games. Focusing on whole foods and avoiding processed items will make sure you're fueling your body with adequate nutrients, which will help you perform your best.

## GAME TIME NUTRITION

During intense training and games, it's important to maintain energy levels to avoid any affect on performance. If you have games or training sessions over an hour long, add in a carbohydrate drink or easily digestible food to top up your energy stores. Simple foods like dried fruit, bananas, and pretzels can do the trick. While water should be you go-to during competition, long training sessions can cause a need for more carbs. Gatorade and similar sports drinks can be used in these situations.

**PRO TIP:** Make your own sport drink by diluting 1/4 cup of fruit juice in two cups of water and add a pinch of salt.

## QUESTIONS?

**Sport Manitoba Performance**  
performance@sportmanitoba.ca  
204-925-5751  
sportmanitoba.ca/performance

## POST-GAME RECOVERY

Within 60 minutes of competing, you should consume a small meal of easily digestible carbs and some protein. For example, chocolate milk, an apple and cheese, or a small can of tuna and crackers. Then, in the three hours following a competition, eat a complete meal of protein, starchy carbs, healthy fats, fruit, and vegetables. This will help replenish your energy and protein levels to kick start repairing any damaged tissues and refueling your muscles.

## WATER IS KEY!

Water is essential to healthy, active bodies and is the medium for all your body's chemical reactions. Dehydration negatively affects performance. Every athlete is different depending on their size and sweat rate but drinking water throughout the day is always important. Aim for 5-10 ml/kg in the 2-4 hours before a competition, and remember, if you're thirsty, it's too late!

## COMPETITION DAYS ARE LONG

You might be at a competition venue all day. It's important to make sure you're fueled even when you're away from the venue. Check out the next page for some snack ideas.



**Sport**  
MANITOBA  
PERFORMANCE



# SNACK IDEAS

## WITHOUT A COOLER:

- Granola bars
- Crackers
- Fruits (fresh or canned)
- Veggies (cut up)
- Nut butter & jam sandwiches
- Fruit to Go
- Apple sauce
- Milk2Go (pasteurized)
- Sport drinks (Gatorade)
- Canned tuna
- Trail mix
- Bagels

## WITH A COOLER:

- Cottage cheese
- Cheese strings
- Yogurt
- Hummus or ranch dips
- Pre-packaged meals (leftovers, energy bites, smoothies)
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Milk or nut beverages
- Sport drinks (Gatorade)
- Frozen fruit
- Sandwiches
- Veggies

## GOOD FOODS TO BUY AT A GAS STATION

- Drinks: water, chocolate milk, Gatorade, coffee, tea
- Fruits/veggies: fresh cut fruit or vegetables, Fruit to Go, dried fruit
- Nuts/seeds: roasted, unsalted nuts (cashews, peanuts, etc.), mixed nuts
- Protein: hard-boiled eggs, Greek yogurt, cheese, beef jerky, canned tuna
- Carbs: granola bars, protein bars, crackers, pretzels
- Pre-made foods: sandwiches, wraps, paninis
- Veggies