

ACUITY SPORT PRE-GAME FUELING BASICS

What athletes should eat, drink & avoid in the 3-4 hours before competition

EAT

CARBOHYDRATES

Make up ~50% of your pre-game plate

- White rice, pasta, or bread
- Baked or sweet potato
- Oatmeal or low-fiber cereal
- Fresh fruit (bananas, grapes, applesauce)
- Toast, tortillas, or English muffins

LEAN PROTEIN

Make up ~25% of your pre-game plate

- Grilled chicken or turkey
- Grilled fish
- Eggs or tofu
- Low-fat deli meat on whole wheat

1 HOUR BEFORE

Light Snack Only

- Banana or dried fruit
- Pretzels or crackers
- Granola bar
- Small PB&J (half sandwich)

DRINK

3-4 HOURS BEFORE

- 16-20 oz of water with your pre-game meal
- Sports drink or electrolyte mix if sweating heavily
- 100% fruit juice (diluted is fine)
- Low-fat milk

DURING COMPETITION

- 4 oz of fluid every 15-20 minutes
- Sports drink for events lasting 60+ minutes
- Electrolyte hydration mix to replace sodium & potassium lost in sweat

Hydration Target:

Aim for 5-7 mL of water per kg of body weight in the 3-4 hours before competing. Urine should be pale yellow—not clear, not dark.

AVOID

HIGH-FAT FOODS

Slows digestion

- Fried foods (fries, wings, fried chicken)
- Fast food burgers, hot dogs, bacon
- Chips, potato chips, nachos
- Whole-milk cheese or heavy cream sauces

HIGH-FIBER FOODS

Risk of GI distress

- Beans, lentils, and legumes
- Bran muffins, high-fiber cereals
- Raw broccoli, cauliflower, or cabbage
- Brown rice or quinoa (close to game time)

OTHER GUT WRECKERS

- Carbonated drinks (soda, sparkling water)
- Excessive caffeine if not part of your routine
- New foods you have never eaten before
- Alcohol (disrupts hydration & sleep)

NIGHT BEFORE

High-carb dinner + plenty of fluids.

Aim for 7-8 hours of sleep.

3-4 HRS OUT

Full pre-game meal.

Carbs + lean protein.

16-20 oz of water.

1 HR OUT

Light carb snack.

8-10 oz of water.

No heavy or new foods.

GAME TIME

4 oz fluids every 15-20 min.

Electrolyte sports drink if active for 60+ minutes.

Sources & Fact-Check Notes: Johns Hopkins Medicine (Nutrition for Athletes); Nationwide Children's Hospital Sports Medicine (Game Day Fueling Plan); American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) Pre-Event Meal Guidelines; Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics/ACSM Joint Position Statement (PubMed 26891166); NIH/PMC Pre-Exercise Nutrition Review (PMC4042570). Document updated to align with ACSM hydration guidelines (5-7 mL/kg) and to correctly separate high-fiber GI-risk foods (such as beans and lentils) from the pre-game intake window.