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HOW TO BUILD A PRE-GAME MEAL

Pre-game meals are designed to provide athletes with long-lasting fuel to get them to and through a game or competition. Ideally this meal should be provided two to four hours before the game, competition, or event so they can eat adequate fuel and have time to digest it.

10 Tips to Shape a Pre-Game Plate

1. Make half of the plate complex carbohydrate.
2. Make one-fourth of the plate lean protein.
3. Make one-fourth of the plate an easy-to-digest vegetable.
4. Add a side of fruit.
5. Avoid high-fat foods like fried foods, creamy sauces, and desserts.
6. Avoid spicy and garlicky foods.
7. Provide plenty of fluids including water and sports drinks.
8. Have salt available to salt foods for extra electrolytes.
9. Provide familiar foods; don't try new foods at pre-game meals.
10. If you have athletes with finicky stomachs, have smoothies or plain sandwiches available.

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Things to consider when planning a pre-game meal:

- What is your budget? Can the booster club help?
- Do any of your athletes have food allergies?
- Is there access to sinks for hand-washing or is hand sanitizer available?
- How large is your team?
 - » Larger teams may want to have food catered versus going to a restaurant, due to time constraints.
- Can the pre-game meal be eaten immediately after set-up or will it sit for a while?
 - » This might determine if you plan a hot meal or a meal that does not need to be kept warm.
 - » If a hot meal will be set up early, be sure to have warmers or chafing dishes with a heat source.
- If you are going to a restaurant:
 - » Plan the meal at least three days in advance (ideally earlier to allow for restaurant to be staffed and prepared).
 - » Call ahead to make sure the restaurant can accommodate a group.
- » Consider the time of day to assess how busy restaurants might be.
- » Choose two to three options for athletes to order from to help with efficiency of ordering and preparation.
- » Consider choosing a restaurant that has bread, rolls, and/or breadsticks available for the table.
- » If tax exempt, bring form to restaurant or provide to manager in advance.
- » Be sure to include gratuity and any other fees in your budget proposal; if using restaurant delivery, allow for delivery fees as well as gratuity.



Whether you are planning a pre-game meal as a booster club, on-the-road, or with a restaurant, here is a simple list to provide those planning the meal.

Carbohydrate Options:

- Pasta with marinara sauce or light butter sauce
- Baked, roasted, or mashed potatoes sweet potatoes
- Rice, rice pilaf, broccoli rice casserole
- Oatmeal, grits, cereal

Protein Options:

- Steak, lean cuts of beef
- Meat sauce for pasta
- Fish
- Chicken
- Eggs

Best Easy-to-Digest Vegetable Options:

- Green beans
- Corn
- Carrots
- Squash, zucchini
- Salad

Bread Options for Extra Carbohydrate:

- Rolls (whole wheat or white)
- Breadsticks
- Cornbread
- Toast, bagels, English muffins, tortillas

Sample Pre-Game Meals:

- Scrambled eggs, whole grain bagel with 100% fruit jam, sausage, and fruit
- Breakfast sandwich with eggs, cheese, and beef sausage with yogurt, fruit, and granola parfait
- Lean beef, potatoes, green beans, cold pasta salad, fruit, and a wheat roll
- Fish, brown rice, green salad with vinaigrette dressing, fruit, and a wheat roll
- Grilled chicken, pasta with marinara sauce, fruit, salad, and breadsticks
- Whole grain sandwich with lean protein, lettuce, tomato, and avocado with fruit and pretzels