



On-the-Go Snacks for Athletes

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Jen works with ICYF to provide expert advice on sports nutrition and healthy eating to the students and families of Indianola. As a board-certified sports dietitian, Jen owns a private practice that focuses on helping athletes stay on the cutting edge with superior nutrition to enhance performance with safety and efficacy.

Usually, a quick snack an hour before competition or practice is ideal. Snacks post-event are also important, especially when another competition is less than 8 hours away. While selecting a carbohydrate-rich food pre-event is best, adding in some protein to your post-event snack/meal is critical to maximize glycogen stores and aid in muscle repair.

Snacks to Fuel Pre-Event

Snacks one hour before an event lasting 60+ minutes should be

- familiar to the athlete. Do not try a food or beverage for the first time right before a competitive event.
- high in carbohydrates, low in fiber and low in fat to facilitate gastric emptying and fuel utilization.
- based on body weight. Consume 1 gram carbohydrate per kilogram body weight (150 pound athlete should consume about 65 grams carbohydrate one hour before an event.)
- based on individual tolerance. Some athletes may need to consume 30g of easily digestible carbohydrates (grapes, banana, sports drink or gel) within 15 minutes of an event if they have a sensitive stomach.

Recovery Snacks

Recovery snacks are a great way to provide needed energy in an athlete's diet. Recovery snacks can be an option for general energy intake but are required when other activities will be performed within eight hours (example: morning weight training with afternoon practice.)

For optimal recovery:

- snacks post workout should include carbohydrate and 10-20 grams to assist in muscle repair.
- the amount of food you consume should be based on body weight. Eat a snack that is 1.5 grams carbohydrate per kilogram bodyweight (example: 150 pound athlete should consume about 100 grams carbohydrate) as soon as tolerable.
- consume high glycemic carbohydrates post exercise. Consuming foods with a high glycemic index result in higher glycogen stores 24 hours after a glycogen depleted exercise is performed. (1) High glycemic food examples include baked potato, bagel, graham crackers, watermelon, raisins, orange juice, honey, pancakes, waffles and sports drinks.

On the Go Snack List

Information contained in this document is not intended for medical advice.



An (*) indicates a good recovery snack option.

- Clif® Bar + banana
- Mix together 2 ounces pretzels + 1/4 cup raisins
- 1 cup 100% juice + 1 cup low-fat yogurt*
1 bagel with low-fat cream cheese
- 1 Nature Valley® granola bar packet + 1 cup skim milk*
- 2 ounces whole grain Kashi® crackers with hummus
- Carnation Instant Breakfast® (mix with low-fat or fat-free milk) + toast with fruit jam*
- 1 Erin Baker's Wholesome Breakfast Cookie®
- Granola bar (Kashi®) + string cheese + 1 cup low-fat or fat free milk*
- Low-fat Animal crackers (single serve -2 ounces) + 8 ounces sport drink
- 1 cup Honey Nut Cheerios® mixed with dried fruit and ¼ cup honey roasted soy nuts*
- Juice Plus+® shake with choice of milk
- 2 Cups Air popped popcorn (Valley® brand) mixed with dried fruit, peanuts*
- Baked Potato Chips (single serve 1.5 ounce) + 16 ounce sports drink
- 2 Rice cakes topped with peanut butter and honey + ¼ cup dried cherries*
- 2 Kashi® frozen waffle topped with almond butter + 1 cup skim or low-fat milk
- Sandwich with lunch meat and cheese slice
- 6 Fig Newton® cookies
- 1 hardboiled egg sprinkled with salt + 1 1/2 cup grapes*
- Naked® Fruit Juice Smoothie with protein
- Graham cracker sticks + a peanut butter to go packs*
- Starkist Lunch to Go® Tuna Packets + 12 extra crackers*
- 2 ounces Baked Corn chips + Salsa + water
- Large Rolled tortilla with hummus
- Instant Oatmeal cup topped with raisins
- 2 Dried Fruit Strips + 12 Nabisco® Wheat Thin crackers
- 12 reduced fat Nabisco Triscuits® dipped in hummus or peanut butter
- ½ cup low-fat cottage cheese with fruit cup*
- 1 pita pocket stuffed with light cream cheese sliced bananas, strawberries & kiwi
- 1 cereal bar + string cheese*
- 1 frozen fruit bar + 6 reduced fat Nabisco Triscuits®
- 1 cup frozen sherbet topped with nuts

This list is intended for athletes who follow a general diet. Contact a sports nutritionist for alternative ideas if you have a food allergy or sensitivity.

References

1. American Dietetic Association. Position of the American Dietetic Association, Dietitians of Canada, and the American College of Sports Medicine: Nutrition and Athletic Performance. Journal of the American Dietetic Association. March 2009 Volume 109 Number 3 p 509-522.