

WHAT TO CHOOSE?

The following are examples of foods to choose and foods to avoid when planning pregame meals, from *The Pregame Meal Planner*, authored by Robert Reber, PhD, Extension Specialist in Nutrition at the University of Illinois.

FOODS TO CHOOSE

Foods	Comments
Pasta (macaroni, spaghetti, noodles, ravioli, plain or with sauce)	Meats, cheese, and oil add fat to the sauce. Use them sparingly.
Rice	Use a sauce low in fat and only as spicy as you can tolerate easily. Or try rice with a little soy sauce flavoring.
Potatoes (baked, boiled, mashed, but not French fries)	Limit butter, gravy, or sour cream.
Starchy vegetables (peas, carrots, winter squash, sweet potatoes)	Cooked vegetables are more easily digested.
Breads (rolls, muffins, crackers, bagels)	Use nutritious, low-fat bread products, quick breads, and spreads.
Cereals (oatmeal, other hot cereals, cold cereals)	Avoid cereals with high sugar content.
Soups (noodle, rice, vegetable, clear broth, consommé)	Choose low-fat soups. Eating large portions of bouillon, or chili, split pea, or bean soups may lead to digestive problems for some athletes.
Pancakes	Limit butter and syrup.
Fruits, fruit juices	Use any juice or cooked fruit except prune. Oranges, bananas, and peeled apples are easily digested raw fruits. You may wish to dilute juices, especially in hot weather. Try hot cider or juice during cold weather.
Milk products (low-fat milk, low-fat yogurt, low-fat cottage cheese, low-fat cheeses, puddings, shakes made with low-fat milk or yogurt and fruit and/or juice)	Avoid high-fat milk products before games.
Liquid meals	Though not a substitute for solid foods in the daily diet, liquid meals are convenient for occasional pregame use.

FOODS TO AVOID

Foods	Comments
Candy, sugar, honey	After an initial rise, your blood-sugar level can actually drop below normal, resulting in a sudden feeling of tiredness or fatigue.
Fried foods, high-fat meats, fats, oils, gravies, sour cream, etc.	Fat digests slowly and therefore stays in the stomach longer.
Some raw fruits, vegetables, popcorn, nuts, dry beans, and peas	Some of these foods may cause gas and/or an uncomfortable feeling of fullness during the game. An athlete needs to avoid the foods that give him or her problems.
Any new food	Don't experiment with new foods right before an event. If you experience any adverse reactions, your body has little time to recover.
Coffee, tea, chocolate, cola	Caffeine consumption can lead to dehydration.
Fruit-flavored drinks	Many drinks contain little fruit juice and a lot of sugar. Read the label.