Practice and Competition

Meal Planning

- Eat only foods your body is familiar with.
- Limit caffeinated beverages, which are diuretics and promote fluid loss.
- Eat two to three hours before practice or a competition. If an athlete is nervous about performance, the digestive process may take longer.
- The majority of the meal (65-75%) should come from complex carbohydrates. Approximately two-thirds of the plate should be filled with high CHO options for quick energy.
- Limit high-fat proteins, such as hamburgers, fried foods, and French fries. They can cause nausea, diarrhea, and cramping, and fat delays gastric emptying.
- Avoid high fiber meals, which can cause bloating and stomach pain.
- Eat small servings of lean, protein-rich foods, such as turkey, eggs, and low-fat milk.
- Limit sugary foods, which could result in a drop in blood sugar level.
- High-calorie meals take longer to leave the stomach than hearty, lighter snacks.

Guidelines for consuming a pre-competition meal

- 3-4 hours before competition for a large meal
- 2-3 hours before a competition for a small meal
- 1-2 hours before a competition for a liquid meal
- < 1 hour before a competition for a small snack

Ideal pre-practice snacks

Eat <1 hour before a competition or practice.
- Granola and cereal bars
- Energy bars
- Dried fruits such as raisins, apricots, apples
- Dry cereal
- Pretzels
- Yogurt
- Bagel
- Slice of whole wheat bread and 1 Tbsp of peanut butter
- Cheese stick
- Banana

Eating during an event

Refuel during extended endurance activities lasting more than 60min.
- Energy Gels are easier to digest than bars. They should be taken with water 15 min before activity, then every 45 minutes during activity.
- High-carb energy bars are easier to digest during activity and should contain 70% CHO, 20% protein, 10% or less fat. They should have a low amount of refined sugars and saturated fats.

Fluid replacement

You are adequately hydrated when urine is clear and you have to urinate frequently. Sports drinks can help with dehydration and muscle cramping because they replenish both fluids and electrolytes lost in sweating with out overdrinking

- Drink 1.5 cups of water 15 minutes before activity
- Drink ½ cups of water every 10-15 minutes during activity
- Drink 2 cups of water for every pound lost after physical activity

Pre-competition nutrition

Replenish muscle stores by choosing CHO-rich foods within 30 minutes after a practice or game and again within two hours. Examples include:
- Bagel
- Turkey sandwich
- Fruit, particularly oranges and bananas
- Fluid replacement drink and trail mix
- Yogurt
- Pretzels
- Raisins