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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: CARBOHYDRATES AND CARB-LOADING

HEALTHY CARBS

For a day or two before an important game or sports event, you want to fully fuel your muscles by eating carbohydrate-rich foods (cereal, bread, pasta, rice, fruits, vegetables) at every meal. Include a side-serving of protein to repair muscles. Limit fatty, greasy foods. *(See below)*

Carbohydrates are not fattening! Well-fueled athletes gain water-weight, because with each ounce of carbohydrates stored in muscles as glycogen, your body stores ~3 ounces water. It helps keep you hydrated!

Exercise less. Reduce your training to rest your muscles! You need time to refuel and recover. Avoid doing any last-minute hard training. You will fatigue your muscles at a time when rest is important to perform.

Eat reasonably. Carbo-loading does not mean stuffing yourself with pasta! It means eating carbs as the foundation of each meal.

Be sure to carefully choose your carbs. When selecting your meals and snacks, fill up on high ***carbohydrate*** foods, not high ***fat*** foods. The two often come together, such as *butter* on potato and *cream* in ice cream.

1-2 DAYS BEFORE

BEST CHOICES:

Highest in Carbohydrates

- Spaghetti and pasta meals with tomato sauce
- Rice, (sweet) potato, stuffing - limit butter, gravy
- Lentils, hummus, beans & rice, split pea soup
- Bread, English muffins, bagels, cereal
- French toast, pancakes, oatmeal
- Jam, jelly, honey, maple syrup
- Fruit snacks: bananas, pineapple, raisins, dates
- Juice beverages: grape, cranberry, orange, cider
- Smoothies made with blended fruit and juice
- Sherbet, sorbet, frozen yogurt
- Apple crisp, blueberry cobbler, fig bars

LESSER CHOICES:

Lower in Carbohydrates

- Pizza & pasta with lots of meat and cheese
- French fries, Chinese fried rice, buttery potato
- Meat-based dinners w/ veggies, but no starch
- Donuts, croissants, Danish pastry
- Large egg & cheese omelets, breakfast meats
- Butter, margarine, cream cheese
- Cookies, chips, high-fat snacks
- Beer, wine, alcohol
- Protein shakes, milk shakes, frappes
- Ice cream - especially gourmet brands
- Desserts made with lots of butter

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Drink extra fluids! Until your urine is a light color a day or two beforehand, drink extra fluids. Don't drink so much that you interrupt your sleep with trips to the bathroom.

Eat a carb-based pre-event breakfast. Choose easy-to-digest foods 1 to 4 hours prior to the start, such as 400 to 800 calories of oatmeal, cereal, bagel, or French toast. This food will fuel your brain, as well as your muscles. It will also help you think clearly.

Carefully choose high *carbohydrate* foods, not high *fat* foods; the two often come together (such as *butter* on potato; *cream* in ice cream).

During long events or at half-time. Consume simple carbs. A sports drink offers carbs to boost your energy, plus fluid to replace sweat losses. Alternatives to sports drinks include drinking water and eating a banana, energy bar, gummy candy, pretzels or other easily digested foods.

After the event. Eat carbohydrates to refuel your muscles, plus some protein to repair your muscles. Replace sodium losses with salty foods (soup, pretzels, spaghetti sauce, salted meals). Drink fluids until urine is a clear color. You might be hungrier than usual for the next two days. Eat well!

1-4 HOURS BEFORE

BEST CHOICES:

Highest in Carbohydrates

- Spaghetti with tomato sauce
- Rice, baked potato, stuffing
- Hummus, beans & rice, lentil soup
- Bread, English muffins, bagels, cereal
- French toast, pancakes, oatmeal
- Jam, jelly, honey, maple syrup
- Fruit snacks: bananas, pineapple, raisins, dates
- Juice: grape, cranberry, orange, cider
- Smoothies made with fruit and juice
- Apple crisp, blueberry cobbler, fruit yogurt

LESSER CHOICES:

Lower in Carbohydrates

- Pizza, pasta loaded w meat & cheese
- Fries, nachos, buttery potato
- Large steak +veggies, no starch
- Donuts, croissants, pastries
- Cheesy omelets with bacon, sausage
- Butter, margarine, cream cheese
- Cookies, chips, high-fat snacks
- Milk shakes
- Protein shakes (with no carbs)
- Ice cream, especially gourmet brands