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Pre-Game Nutrition: Baseball

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It is well known that nutrition plays a key role in optimizing athletic performance. Sports nutrition for baseball not only includes what the athlete needs to eat and drink, but also the timing and quantities. This article intends to describe what the baseball player should consume pre-, during-, and post-practice / game to maximize their on-field performance and recovery.

Effective pre-training or pre-game nutrition; that is the consumption of fluid and calories, optimizes fluid delivery and exogenous energy to working muscles, which in turn can spare muscle glycogen utilization potentially delaying the onset of in-training or in-game fatigue. A common complaint of many athletes (not just baseball players) is that they do not feel comfortable playing with a full stomach. This is due to the varying absorption rates of different foods and quantities consumed. 500-700kcal meals (eg, pasta, stir-fry) should be consumed 3-4 hrs prior, whereas 175-200kcal 'snacks' can be consumed upto 1 hr prior. The foods consumed pre-game should be low-fat, as fats are not efficiently utilized during exercise, rather, they should include a combination of low- and hi-glycemic sugars, hi-bioavailable proteins (Branched-Chain Amino Acids [BCAA's]), and electrolytes. A mix of hi-and lo-glycemic carbs will sustain elevations in blood glucose levels longer than simple sugars alone, and it is reported that consumption of BCAA's pre-exercise reduce muscle protein breakdown aiding in post-exercise recovery.

Additionally, pre-practice / game hydration should include 500-750ml of water or sports drinks that have 5-8% sugar and electrolytes 1 hr before performance. Fruit juices that are high in sugar (>8%), and carbonated drinks slow gastric emptying and can make the athlete feel bloated, and slow.

The goal of pre-training / game nutrition is to satisfy performance fluid and energy requirements so the body can be more efficient (↑ blood glucose, ↑ circulating BCAA's, ↑ hydration) in powering baseball related movements. Effective pre-game nutrition will give you more energy to out hit, out run, and out perform your competition.

If you would like help in developing your own pre-training / game Baseball nutrition plan, contact our Arwen, PTS Sports Dietician at arwen@performancetrainingsystems.net or check our Performance Nutrition web page at www.performancetrainingsystems.net/PerformanceNutrition.php