

What to eat during the season

Runners need to watch their health – Runners need a nutritious, well-balanced diet.

(Generally 65-70% carbohydrates, 15-20% protein, 15% fats).

On race days runners generally like to stay away from fried, fatty, or sugary foods and carbonated or acidic drinks. Runners also need to stay well hydrated. Water or watered down juices are best. They should try to stay away from drinks with sugar, caffeine, or carbonation.

Runners need adequate rest – Because of the high energy demands athletes will need time to rest and recover from tough workouts. They should try to get between 7 and 8 hours of sleep a night, especially 2 nights before a race.

The majority of your food intake before the race should be complex carbohydrates.

Avoid foods that are too sweet.

Avoid high protein meals. Protein takes longer to digest and may remain in your stomach.

Avoid foods that are high in fat. Fatty foods also remain in your stomach longer and can cause problems.

Avoid high fiber foods. Fiber can cause intestinal problems such as diarrhea and nausea.

For dinner try eating pasta. Do not overeat so that you feel bloated.

Eat only foods that your body is familiar with. If you have been eating a banana and milk before your races, do not switch to a burrito with the works. Anything that your body is not used to can cause problems.

For Saturday practices and meets, eat breakfast two to three hours before you race.

Ideally, eat carbohydrates with a little protein, such as oatmeal with raisins and honey, or cereal with banana and low-fat milk, or toast and yogurt - for sustained energy. Importantly, stick with familiar foods that you find easy to digest.

Ideas for breakfast:

a couple pieces of toast with jelly
fruit

pancakes with fruit (no syrup)
or anything else that is easy to digest would be great.

Ideas for afternoon races:

Stick with foods that digest quickly and easily, and limit the snack to 300-400 calories at the most. Good choices would be

a granola bar or sports bar

1 cup of dry cereal

a handful of trail mix and/or dried fruit

some whole-grain crackers with a little peanut butter

small bag of pretzels

If you're too nervous to eat solid food, nibble on snacks that are tolerable, and try drinking 2-3 cups of a full-calorie (non-diet) sports drink.