

# Pre-Game Meals for High School Football

The most important part about the pre-game football meal is simply to make sure you eat it. Countless research suggest you should fuel up beforehand because it will give you greater stamina and enhance your overall performance.

The primary goal for providing athletes with a pre-game meal is to fuel the body for competition. Most recommendations suggest



**Dr. Robert Silverman**

meal consumption two to three hours before an event, and it should provide 500 to 1,000 calories. The best strategy is to choose lower-fat foods as fat takes longer to digest. Therefore, high fat meals can leave the athlete with a full heavy stomach and not enough energy to perform their best.

When planning a

pre-game meal, try to avoid any foods that are fried. Also avoid fatty foods like bacon and sausage. Rather, choose foods that favor leaner protein and carbohydrates such as breads, cereals, whole wheat pasta and fruits. These carbohydrates are critical since the body breaks them down into energy rapidly during exercise or a game, thus providing constant energy for the body.

For afternoon or evening games, choose grilled, baked or

boiled or steamed meats and use tomatoes instead of cream sauces. Rather than ordering French fries, opt for a baked or broiled potato. Additional food options for pre-game meals include:

- Turkey or chicken on whole-wheat/multigrain sandwich, fruit salad, frozen yogurt
- Eggs, whole wheat/multigrain waffles, fruit
- Pasta with red sauce (marinara), grilled chicken salad and fruits
- Smoothie, cereal, fruits
- 6 oz. steak with baked potato or brown rice, vegetables

## Fluids

Drink plenty of fluids with your meal, making sure you include water. Drink 16 to 20 ounces of water during your pregame meal and then an additional 12 ounces about 15 to 20 minutes before the game to help avoid dehydration. Avoid items with caffeine such as coffee, tea and soft drinks since they act as a diuretic, which will dehydrate you. These drinks can also fill your bladder very quickly, which makes players uncomfortable when they compete, therefore hindering performance.

## Athlete's Eating Schedule for Game Day

### Morning

Force yourself to get up early enough to eat a high carbohydrate meal and plan to have it mostly digested before competition time. Be sure to include a good hydration routine as most of us are dehydrated in the morning.

### Early Afternoon

A good breakfast three to four hours before the event, then a light snack about 45 minutes before the event would top off your fuel stores and leave your stomach in a comfortable state.

### Afternoon

An adequate breakfast and a good pre-game lunch are the right move to get the day running smoothly and have enough fuel on board. Then have a light snack before the game to top off your glycogen stores.

### Evening

Breakfast and lunch as usual. The evening meal timing will depend on timing of the game. If you have three hours between the event and dinner, have a good pre-game meal. If you only have an hour or so before the event, make your meal more like a large snack. Then eat a meal right after you finish your activity to fully recover.

Chappaqua resident Dr. Robert G. Silverman is a certified nutrition specialist, certified clinical nutritionist and certified strength and conditioning specialist. He is also a chiropractor and sports injury consultant with a practice in White Plains and serves as a member of the medical team of New York City's Triathlons and Marathons, Westchester Triathlon and multiple international Iron Man events, and local sports venues. Dr. Silverman can be reached at 914-287-6464 or by e-mail at [info@DrRobertSilverman.com](mailto:info@DrRobertSilverman.com). Also visit [www.DrRobertSilverman.com](http://www.DrRobertSilverman.com).

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