Pre-game Meal

A good pre-game meal for a basketball player should consist of a combination of protein and carbohydrates and should keep fats to a minimum. Players should avoid empty calories from high-fat and sugary foods such as potato chips, cheeseburgers and cupcakes. Providing your body with nutritious food before a game will pay dividends during the game, allowing your muscles to operate at peak performance levels.

Proteins come in a variety of foods, including meats, dairy products and nuts, and are vital to muscle performance. Choose a lean meat, such as turkey or chicken, when building your pregame meal but do not include deep-fried options of these lean selections. A sandwich is a good way to work lean meat into a meal without adding unnecessary fat and cholesterol. Meats also can be worked into a meal as part of a pasta dish or in a soup that’s loaded with vegetables. A tall glass of milk or a handful of nuts are other staples you can work into your pregame meal to provide your body with the needed protein to help your muscles perform optimally.

Carbohydrates break down quickly in the body, providing it with an effective source of nutrition, which comes in a variety of forms, including pasta, bread, fruits and vegetables. Pasta dishes, such as spaghetti and fettuccine, are good sources of carbohydrates and, by nature, are low in fat as long as no or lean meat is used to accompany the dish. When using bread, be sure to choose whole-wheat, high-fiber breads as these types typically contain fewer preservatives and promote digestive health. Fruits and vegetables make effective additions to a pregame meal and offer a satisfied feeling without making you feel weighed down.
Samples

A six-inch ham, turkey and Swiss sub sandwich with lettuce, tomatoes and green peppers makes a good pre-game meal that is both nutritious and tasty. Avoid the mayo and other high-fat condiments and add a banana or apple with some carrot sticks to this meal to round out the meal’s nutritional value. If you’ve got a hankering for a cheeseburger before tip-off, opt for lean ground beef and be sure to include veggies on the burger. Cheese is high in fat, but a slice will not offset the overall nutritional value of these sample meals. Although sports drinks may be a good choice during a game because of their replenishing and quick-energy qualities, they should be avoided before a game. Water and milk are ideal beverages for a pregame meal.

Pregame meals should be eaten two to three hours before tip-off for optimal blood sugar and nutritional levels to have an impact on performance. As a rule, the closer to game time, the smaller the meal. Because they digest slowly, keep fats and protein to a minimum. Your pre-game meals should consist of foods you are familiar with and that will not cause digestive problems. Avoid foods that are known to cause gas, such as vegetables from the cabbage family and cooked beans. Choose low-glycemic foods, which digest quickly, helping to regulate your blood sugar levels.